

Confluences

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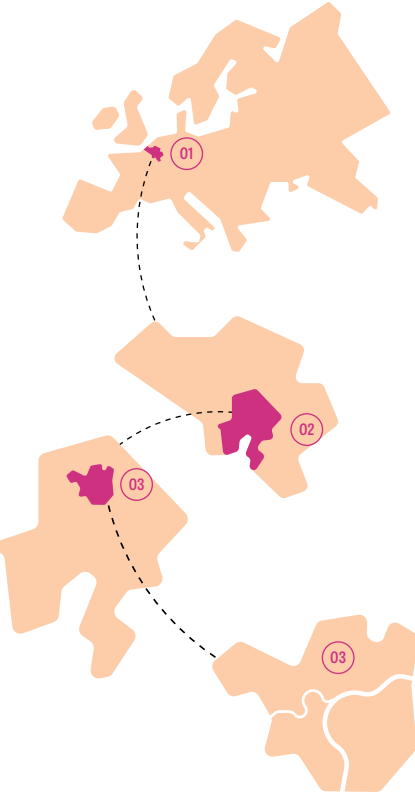
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OUR TERRITORY

01 BELGIUM

- Located in the heart of Europe
- 11.8 M inhabitants over 30,688 km²
- Borders with the Netherlands, Germany, France and Luxembourg



02 PROVINCE OF NAMUR

- 505,348 inhabitants
- 7 "Most Beautiful Villages of Wallonia" in the territory
- 13 nature parks, 4 of which are signatories of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism
- 3 national parks
- 3.3 M+ visitors in 2024
- 558,000 hectares of forest

03 CITY OF NAMUR

- 115,029 inhabitants
- 21.9% under 20 y.o.
- 27.3 % over 60 y.o.
- 47,000+ visitors in 2024
- 44.4% of households = 1 person in 2024

Each time I have walked into strange rooms with poems to tell, I was taught something about what **connects us** being more powerful than what divides.

Kae Tempest, On Connection



Dive into the heart of Namur!
Scan the QR code
and explore the city in 360°
namur2030.eu/en/namur-360

**OUR CONCEPT, CONFLUENCES, HAS NOT CHANGED.
IT HAS BECOME STRONGER INSTEAD.**

Our project is still one for this medium-sized city where a major European river and a Franco-Belgian river meet at a point called Confluence. Where the eddies can be felt. Where just about anything can happen. We are still the city where the presence of water, over thousands of years, has enabled humans to live and thrive since Neolithic times. And before them, animals. And before them, the plant world. Yes, it has always been a **Confluence of lives.**

We are also a **Confluence of colours** which, when seen from the sky, means we are still those shades of green, flat plains and forests of beech and oak trees. We are still the yellow of agricultural land and peri-urban areas. The multiple shades of blue of the lakes, rivers and streams. The mysterious layout of the canals and the winding course of the streams. We are still the beige of the sandy banks. The grey of the cliffs of Dinant, the cobbled streets and the Citadel dominating the landscape, which for centuries has enabled us to fight back against attacks.

But like alchemy, we have turned all this symbolism into a commitment.

A commitment to continue attracting opposites. To magnetize the differences. To listen to the sound of clashing ideas. To take heed of the foam that forms when opposites meet. And to bring about positive change through convergence, dialogue, experimentation and humility.

For us this is what it takes to resist the brutalization of the world, the stupor, the resignation, the cynicism or the retreat that results from it. In hydrology, the opposite of confluence is diffuence: division. The risk of a rupture occurring between two realities that are nevertheless destined to coexist in the same world. In recent months, we have seen the acceleration of this awful polarisation on an international scale. Our territory continues to

hold strong, because our society is holding strong. But like elsewhere in the European Union, it too is threatening to tear itself apart under the weight of fear. Fear of others. Fear of making ends meet and fear of the end of the world. Fear for our health and safety. Fear for biodiversity and the environment. Fear for freedom and for the future of our democracy. Fear for our children and those among us least able to defend themselves. **There are a thousand ways to describe the major crises we are experiencing and the divisions they are creating between us. But perhaps there are not a thousand ways to solve them. So, in Namur, we suggest Confluence.**

With the support of cross-party political will, a project territory of 500 000 inhabitants and a long-term cultural strategy, **Namur 2030 will draw on the historical, geographical and sociological tensions of its territory to stem diffuence and hence act as a laboratory for the rest of Europe.**

To achieve this, Namur is looking both to its past and to its future. UNESCO will confirm this as we combine a rich tangible and intangible heritage with an ultra-dynamic digital ecosystem. This cocktail gives rise to powerful projects such as *Folklore 2.0*, the spearhead of the first chapter of our artistic programming.

Namur is also the capital of a Wallonia that is struggling to keep pace with Flanders in the race for economic prosperity. On the other hand though, it is a territory that has not succumbed to extremism unlike so many others in Europe and that has managed to effectively resist the dangers of extremism, supremacism, and separatism. Perhaps this statement is too political? We believe that opting out of the world is no longer an option. Every town, every city and every cultural provider must take their share of responsibility.



It is no coincidence that **Responsibility** is one of our major projects. This project clearly expresses our desire to participate in building a fairer society which, while not yet managing to include everyone on an equal footing, is determined not to fail by succumbing to discrimination, even unintentionally or unconsciously. It's an ethic that extends far beyond the realm of art, with a commitment to limiting the environmental impact of the event itself and making Namur 2030 a catalyst for ecological transformation, resilience and sturdiness in the territory.

So it is no coincidence that we position ourselves as a **laboratory for responsible digital technology** (chapter 3) or that we are building a methodical network that promotes the exercise of cultural rights on a local level, with the *Little Connexits* and on a territory level, with the *Confluence Hubs* (chapter 4). Nor is it a coincidence that our largest project for the summer of 2030, *Dolce Vita*, is based on the idea of offering new and connected experiences to all living things. This is the flagship project of the second part of our artistic programme.

Experiences as a vehicle for social cohesion with the firm commitment to providing care is what is proposed by *Weaving the edges*, thanks to a multidisciplinary initiative involving hundreds of artists and nearly eighty institutions from the healthcare sector, ranging from early childhood care to retirement homes, prisons and centres for migrants, whether they come from Ukraine or African countries. This project is central to the third part of our artistic programme.

Generally speaking, we advocate that communities that find themselves underrepresented in the cultural life of the territory should obtain full place. And for a capital of culture to be truly European, it must be **welcoming** to all generations. Sometimes described as “the sleeping beauty”, Namur is home to more than 21 000 Belgian and foreign students at the University of Namur and other higher education institutions, citizens in their own right, people who have a voice, visions and solutions to offer. Partners of the present thanks to **Now it's our turn!**, a structured programme for the participation of 0-25-year-olds in the city's development and in the

cultural dynamics of Namur 2030 (chapter 4).

- **temporal** or generational, which takes us to contrast the **past** and the **future**, tradition and modernity, folklore and digital technology, young people and older people.
- **geographical**, which takes us to contrast **local** and **global** matters, firm establishment to openness, protecting what is close to defending what is far away.
- **sociological or sensitive**, which takes us to contrast **tensions** and **attentions** to questions relating to gender, different cultures, minorities, inclusion, care, disabilities.

These clearly distinguished dimensions of Confluence is the result of the intense work and ongoing dialogue carried out following our shortlisting for the title of ECoC. Over the past nine months, Namur 2030 has continued to gain depth and clarity by mobilising all of the driving forces in the territory and all of our national and European partners. In all, **more than 5 000 people have made a contribution to this Bid Book 2**. Each of these initiatives has helped to strengthen a movement that has spread from Gembloux to Dinant and from Lublin to Kiruna. It is a movement that appeals as much to the driving forces behind it, who are filled with enormous enthusiasm for this catalytic project, as it does to European stakeholders who are looking at Namur with unprecedented curiosity. It is a project which, in the context of multiple tensions and the decline of fundamental rights, advocates playing the joyful and complex game of horizontal dialogue. It is a project that celebrates its experimentations. Because making Confluence is not always an easy task. But Namur holds all the cards it needs to give it a try.

So, get on board.

And Together, let's create new Confluences.



01

Contribution to the long-term strategy/

Q/02

CULTURAL STRATEGY AND POTENTIAL CHANGES

OVERALL CONTEXT

Namur 2030 is part of the **Namur Confluent Culture (NCC)**, which is the City of Namur's structural cultural policy. And NCC itself is part of the Transversal Strategic Programme (TSP), which is a local governance approach put forward to local authorities in Wallonia that aims to promote a culture of forward planning and assessment of our policies. Namur was a pilot city for the introduction of the TSP and the first to approve its own programme in 2013. Namur 2030 is therefore the culmination of a long-term strategy implemented by a city that views culture as a fundamental pillar of its development.

The name NCC is derived from the actual place name of **La Confluence**. The Confluence is a complex transport and mobility hub located in the heart of Namur. It is the place where the rivers Meuse and Sambre – two of the largest waterways in north-western Europe – come together. It is also where the historic centre of Namur meets the Citadel, one of the oldest and most important defence and security sites in European history. Long neglected, The Confluence has recently benefited from major redevelopment made possible by ERDF funding for 2014-2020. This upgrade work has rebuilt the link between two riverbanks that had long been cut off from each other and transformed this once obstructed crossing point into a tangible territorial symbol of a new way to experience and live in the city.

Create Confluences has become the leitmotif for the City of Namur and the NCC cultural strategy has been put in place to spearhead this initiative. The political will at the time was to go beyond “*short-term management that responds to needs as and when they arise*” and to “*create a **strong backbone** endorsed by the land and supported by the local political authorities*”, wrote the Mayor, Maxime Prévot, at the time. This position enabled indeed to make Namur a city that “*promotes culture and heritage excellence as a driving force for*

innovation and socioeconomic energy and dynamism”.

The main lines of the NCC were developed through participation with all the cultural and community stakeholders and citizens who wanted to play a part in its development. Namur 2030 is a catalyst for this strategy. As a result:

For the period 2013-2022 — NCC#1 (approved unanimously on 17th October 2013) made it possible to draw up a register of the cultural infrastructure lacking in Namur, as well as to open or relocate thirteen cultural venues and, at the same time, to support 330 projects representing 10% of the city's annual budget.

At the same time, in 2021, Namur joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of media arts. This recognition highlights the city's ability to combine cultural and digital strategies, while strengthening the skills of its cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and their links with the social and economic sectors. During the same period, UNESCO also recognised “Stilt walkers”, a centuries old Namur tradition, as intangible cultural heritage in 2021.

For the period 2023-2033 — NCC#2 (approved unanimously on 23rd January 2024) set three main priorities: first, to ensure that artists and the general public take ownership of the spaces created by NCC#1; second, to provide in-depth and substantive support for Namur's community organisations, particularly through the influence created by major events in the territory; and, finally, to expand the cross-disciplinary nature of culture to other sectors such as digital industries, health and the private sector, to make Namur a truly more ‘confluent’ city, i.e. healthier, more resilient, vibrant, creative and inclusive.

These priorities were defined through Namur's participation in the European Agenda 21 for Culture Pilot Cities programme (in 2015), the first worldwide document for cities with the

intention of promoting cultural development. For ten years, this participation has ensured that tangible, transversal international commitments to culture have been included in the city's policies.

For the period ahead, 2034-2044 — NCC#3 will be introduced and developed from Namur 2030 onwards. This programme will mainly involve extending the NCC dynamic to a larger territory between the City of Namur and the Province of Namur, encompassing urban, peri-urban and rural areas. To achieve this aim, the title of ECoC is viewed as being central as a laboratory and accelerator of confluences. From the outset of the bid process, the City of Namur has worked closely with the Province, the Economic Office of the Province (BEP) and the various neighbouring local authorities to create a project territory representing nearly 500 000 people, with a view to improving access to and participation in cultural activities. This territory combines the 46 districts of Namur (an area larger than the Brussels-Capital region) and the eight “water territories”, all located between 15 and 40 kilometres from the centre of Namur.

This strategy as a whole did not undergo any changes between our first and this second Bid Book. On the contrary, in fact: there are now more synergies between Namur 2030 and the general direction taken by the City. Being shortlisted for the title of ECoC has been seen as recognition in itself and it marks a key step in **strengthening the ties between Namur 2030 and the city's long-term policies as a whole (not just its cultural ones)**.

These are some of the different strategic priorities that have been strengthened in recent months:

- Consolidation of **the project territory**
- Consolidation of **regional and international partnerships**
- Consolidation of **the strategy for cultural participation**
- Consolidation of **a specific strategy for children and young people**
- Consolidation of **the strategy on sustainability**
- Consolidation of **the direction taken on digital matters**
- Consolidation of **cross-sector cooperation**

Consolidation of the project territory — The Namur Confluent Culture aims to go beyond the institutional logic by densifying ties between institutional, associative, private and civic parties across a wider area in order to strengthen the cultural rights of the 500 000 local people and their active participation in the creation of culture. With the ECoC project, the City and Province of Namur have a powerful tool for the development of the territory at their disposal. As tangible proof of their commitment, the Namur 2030 initiative was officially included in January 2025 in the Municipal and Provincial Policy Declarations for the next six years. This is a further confirmation of the project's place in local and provincial public policy (Q/43).

On a provincial level, we previously referred to a project territory made up of seven water areas. Due to keen interest, there are now eight. The geographical boundaries and partnerships of these different areas have been defined and new local authorities have joined the ECoC adventure. The ‘Conference of Mayors’ held on 14th March 2025, with the support of the Provincial Governor, further emphasised political support for the project, consolidating the foundations of a collective commitment that is essential for the success of the entire ECoC dynamic. These local authorities are all effective members of the non-profit association ‘Namur 2030 and beyond’, which is carrying the application.

- Floreffe, Sambreville and Jemeppe-sur-Sambre crossed by the river Sambre, Fosses-la-Ville nearby;
- Gembloux and Sombreffe crossed by the river Orneau, Eghezée, La Bruyère and Fernelmont close to the catchment;
- Andenne bordered by the river Meuse, Ohey located nearby;
- Molinee Vallée with Anhée, Yvoir, Profondeville and Mettet;
- Dinant and Onhaye bordered by the river Meuse; Beauraing and Hamois in the hinterland;
- Ciney, Houyet, Gesves and Assesse close to the river Lesse;
- Rochefort on the edge of Famenne, Caestienne and Ardenne in a loop of the river called the Lomme, in the region of Haute-Lesse with Somme-Leuze, Havelange, Bièvre, Gedinne and Vresse-sur-Semois;
- Cerfontaine and Walcourt close to the Eau d'Heure



lakes; Philippeville, Hastière, Couvin, Doische, Florennes and Viroinval between Eau Noire and Viroin.

We are developing a ECoC whose activities will take place 60% within the city limits of Namur and 40% outside the city limits. We have also specified the geographical location of two flagship projects for Namur 2030, *Little Connexits* and *Confluence Hubs* following this breakdown.

- The 46 *Little Connexits* are located in the area of Namur, with one for each of the 46 districts of Namur.
- The 8 *Confluence Hubs* are located in the water areas, with one for each per territory.

Spread across the territory in this way, a comprehensive network is ensured in terms of cultural rights. This means that none of the 500 000 local inhabitants are more than ten kilometres from a cultural venue outside Namur city and more than 500 metres from one within the Namur city area (chapter 4).

In addition, our artistic strategy makes extensive use of public spaces located throughout the territory, whether in the countryside, in villages or on the streets. The aim is to repurpose these spaces as ‘public places’ where people can redefine their relationship with these spaces and become more attached to them through their unique cultural and artistic experiences (Q/05).

This year enabled us to intensify dialogue with each territory through a major roadshow held between January and April, which attracted several hundred participants. Various theme-based points of convergence emerged as a result. The work on the first Bid Book had enabled us to establish the main lines of action, and the roadshow to consolidate the second Bid Books (chapter 4).

Consolidation of regional and international partnerships — This second phase of the bid process also provided us with an opportunity to strengthen our partnerships with major university cities in Wallonia, such as Liège, Mons and Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve. But also Ardennes; Flanders; Brussels; large and smaller cities throughout Europe; and European institutions and networks (Wallonia-Brussels General Delegation to the European Union, WBI, AWEX, European Commission, Committee of the Regions, Culture Next, etc.).

All these processes, which involve European and international artists and partners at every stage, are underpinned by the City’s aim to develop its connections on the national level and to position itself on the international stage to “create opportunities for its economic, cultural and educational stakeholders”.

“Namur must strengthen its position as an international cultural crossroads”, states the municipal Transversal Strategic Programme. Local authorities are well aware that there is still a long way to go to develop Namur as a magnet for creative talent and put it on the map of major European cities in terms of arts and culture. As a result, Namur 2030 is also developing a solid strategy for

attracting international audiences, in conjunction with Visit Wallonia and others (Q/12).

Being a ECoC also means representing Belgium as a whole to the world for a year. Moreover, 2030 is Belgium’s bicentennial year. So we have turned this strategic element into an artistic project that explores what it means to be Belgian today and to showcase Belgium’s place in Europe and the world (Bicentennial focus Q/06). Namur 2030 has also decided to examine the role of international cooperations today, particularly between Europe and Africa, and to focus on the cultural ties that need to be reinvented between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Belgium (Congo Dynamo, Q/06).

Namur 2030 is based on and intends to develop the international networks of the City of Namur (International Association of Francophone Mayors, Vertech City, UNESCO Creative cities of media Arts, etc.). It is also an opportunity to establish international exchanges for artists and volunteers (artist residencies, volunteering strategy, etc.). These are detailed in Q/11.3, Q/11.4 and Q/13.

Consolidation of the strategy for cultural participation — The Municipal Policy Statement, the document that outlines the mandate of the elected representatives who won the last elections, makes a bold statement: “All cities that manage to create economic and social momentum and cohesion are those that have invested in creativity. (...) Placing culture at the forefront of municipal concerns, alongside the everyday challenges faced by the people of Namur, is an act of faith in the future. We are therefore delighted that the prospect of becoming European Capital of Culture in 2030 has opened up to us. We will devote all of our energy and resources to becoming the ultimate winner”.

Thus, despite the extremely tight budgetary constraints facing the major cities in Wallonia, the City of Namur has never wavered from its ambitions for Namur 2030. At the very heart of the Namur Confluent Culture is the goal of positioning culture for its own sake and in recognition of its positive impact on diversity, social cohesion and a sense of belonging and innovation. “Culture needs to become even more democratic”, states the wording of the declaration. “We must enable access for all, regardless of their socioeconomic conditions or geographical location, without discrimination. To achieve this, emphasis must be placed on cultural mediation, promotion and democratisation”.

As a result, Namur 2030 is being built with the help of the local people with a view to ensuring maximum access to culture for a wide range of audiences, including those who are marginalised, or who find themselves in a precarious situation, including those considered to be “non-audiences” (chapter 4, as well as numerous artistic projects, including *Weaving the edges* in Q/06). These aims were given form between the two rounds of voting with the holding of numerous joint project committee meetings bringing together representatives from the City, the Province, and the cultural and social sectors. These collective working meetings, attended by hundreds of public and semi-public stakeholders, as well as artists, made it possible to further develop the Namur 2030 projects which include in particular

the *Little Connex*ts and the *Now it's our turn!* initiatives. We will come back to this programme below.

Consolidation of a specific strategy for children and young people —

Involving young people today means ensuring the success of NCC#3 and the legacy of Namur 2030. As part of our artistic programme and governance, a specific place has been designed to build Namur 2030 with the younger generations – i.e. those who will be between the ages of 0 and 25 in 2030. All of the cultural and educational sectors in Namur have come together with young people to create a cross-sector initiative called *Now it's our turn!*, which serves as a sounding board for the needs, desires and projects of Generation Z and Generation Alpha.

This focus is no coincidence, as it is one of the aims of NCC #2, which

- seeks to create intergenerational confluences through the programme “Youth and Heritage” programme that we are engaged in (Q/08);
- provides mobility aids for disadvantaged young people;
- despite the budgetary context, it is increasing the scope of its Article 27 scheme (a scheme to guarantee access to cultural activities for all through a ticket costing just €1.25) and its socio-cultural programmes for young people in neighbourhoods with a high density of public housing;
- is developing a strategy with a *Words Read, Words Said* festival and an encyclopaedic project on literature with libraries, cultural centres, youth centres, etc. throughout the country, including more remote neighbourhoods and villages; which enables us to rollout Fluencies with a strong local base (Q/06).

Particular attention is also being paid to the academic world, which is a real breeding ground for local development within the city and more broadly within the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. The decision to appoint the Rector of the University of Namur (UNamur) as Chair of the Namur 2030 Administrative Board speaks volumes about our commitment to promoting and strengthening the skills of young people and increasing interaction between young people and society through culture. Our partnership with Ottignies and Louvain-La-Neuve is also significant in this regard, as the latter is home to the French-speaking section of Belgium's oldest and most prestigious university. We support cooperative projects between the two universities, which are united in a university alliance called AULNE (University Alliance Louvain Namur Ensemble) created to strengthen the long-term links between the two academic centres.

The Transversal Strategic Programme also provides for greater openness towards Europe for young people, through an integrated and coherent policy designed to support the development of international relations. We are building on this to develop high value-added projects in collaboration with the University of Namur and all higher education institutions. In addition, we are developing a volunteer programme with them to promote European mobility, actively involving young people and different generations (chap. 4). With this in mind, the expertise acquired in international mobility management

within the Namur Academic Unit, which combines all higher education institutions in the province, will be fully utilised to implement international projects for students. In addition, specific mobility projects may be developed to capitalise on the ECoC and contribute directly to it.

Consolidation of the strategy on sustainability —

Organising a ECoC and everything that goes with it over the next ten years brings responsibilities. Responsibility is a word that you will often find at the heart of our artistic vision and programming (Q05 and Q06). One of these responsibilities concerns the colossal challenge of ecological transition, in which we must all play our part.

The City of Namur has committed to implementing the Air-Climate-Energy Plan 2030, which aims for a 55% reduction in emissions by 2030 through around one hundred actions. Inspired by Bourges 2028, Namur 2030 is committed to following this pathway to mitigate climate change — a trajectory set by the Paris Agreement to preserve the planet's habitability, and enshrined in the European Climate Law. Namur even intends to accelerate the 40 adaptation and resilience measures outlined in the City's Climate Plan.

To achieve this, Namur 2030 has committed to developing a 3-point strategy:

- a strict **carbon management** system will be incorporated into the governance of the project, with tools for systematically assessing the environmental impact of each decision, in the same way as financial trade-offs.
- a “**carbon budget**” of 116 kt Co₂eq not to be exceeded and based on a maximum carbon footprint of 58 kg CO₂eq per visit, in line with European climate targets for 2030.
- a **low-carbon charter** to ensure that there is an operational framework from the outset shared by all stakeholders in the ECoC in order to embed sustainable practices right across the cultural production chain.

Within only a few months, Namur 2030 has enabled the city to become actively involved in numerous European networks committed to a sustainable future, in which citizen participation, critical creativity, responsible digital technology and ecological transition are shared priorities (Q/11.1 and Q/11.2). Namur 2030 has adopted a very practical and proactive approach: every event in the programme has a ‘Plan B’ in case of extreme weather conditions. At the same time, Namur 2030 supports a dynamic approach to **pooling resources** within the local cultural sector. This project is being implemented in partnership with Event Change, a leading organisation in supporting sustainable transitions in the cultural and events sector. Finally, the sustainability strategy also permeates the entire digital axis of Namur 2030, with constant attention paid to the environmental impact of the technologies and devices implemented.

Consolidation of the direction taken on digital matters —

In just fifteen years, Namur has revolutionised the French-speaking Belgian public's perception of digital technology and has forged an international reputation for

itself in this field. The KIKK Festival, which attracts 25 000 visitors from 50 different countries every year to celebrate digital arts, has become a ‘galaxy’ that, in addition to its annual festival, manages the Pavillon and actively participates in the dynamic TRAKK creative hub, where Namur 2030 has set up its offices. KIKK has also launched the Women in Digital Summit and the Wake! initiative, which represents the entire digital creative community in Wallonia. This ecosystem, which includes the Haute École Albert Jacquard (HEAJ), Namur Innovative and Sustainable (NID), the Higher Institute of Music and Pedagogy (IMEP), UNamur, Technobel and numerous companies, has enabled Namur to join the **UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of media arts**, becoming the first Belgian city to achieve this recognition.

NCC #2 plans to explore new avenues in this area by combining technological innovation with social and cultural innovation. “*We want responsible, localised digital technology that promotes participation by the people and better community living*”, states the wording. As you will see as you read more details in the chapters 2 and 4, this is exactly what Namur 2030 is putting into practice in its strategy:

- by making digital a tool for accessibility,
- by developing numerous artistic projects aimed at promoting digital literacy among the people,
- by ensuring that technology bridges rather than widens the gaps between people,
- by giving prominence to the way AI impacts creation and the arts sector more broadly,
- by developing digital mediation to facilitate accessibility, dissemination and understanding of culture, the arts, heritage and cultural information,
- by developing a well-thought-out communication strategy that uses digital technology to facilitate centralised and responsible access to information.

In its desire to become a real Laboratory and accelerator of Confluences, Namur 2030 is keen to address the tension that exists between the goal of digital expansion and sustainability objectives. That’s what it sets out in its **Responsible Digital Laboratory** (Q/08, & Q/11), which involves a significant demand: facing up to the simultaneously negative and positive impact of digital. To achieve this, Namur 2030 accompanies and supports, through the *F(r)ictions* project (Q/06), works that explore the fragile balances of responsible digital technology. It promotes the creation of digital commons aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of the cultural sector. In 2031, it will leave behind a federated network of local, national and international stakeholders, all collectively committed to sustainable, ethical and responsible digital technology.

Consolidation of cross-sector cooperation — One of the main groundings of Namur 2030, capital of confluences, is to invent new forms of cooperation. This is in line with the aims of NCC#2, which “*creates opportunities for employment and supports a dynamic economy*” and the invention “*new economic models that benefit citizens: an economy that is shared, collaborative, circular, digital, with*

short supply chains, doing so particularly by stimulating tourism and cultural events, which are drivers of socio-economic development”. What is covered by NCC#2 relates to the banks of the rivers Sambre and Meuse as levers for urban redevelopment and quality of life, support for local festivals and cultural life in neighbourhoods more generally, and support for folk and traditional groups.

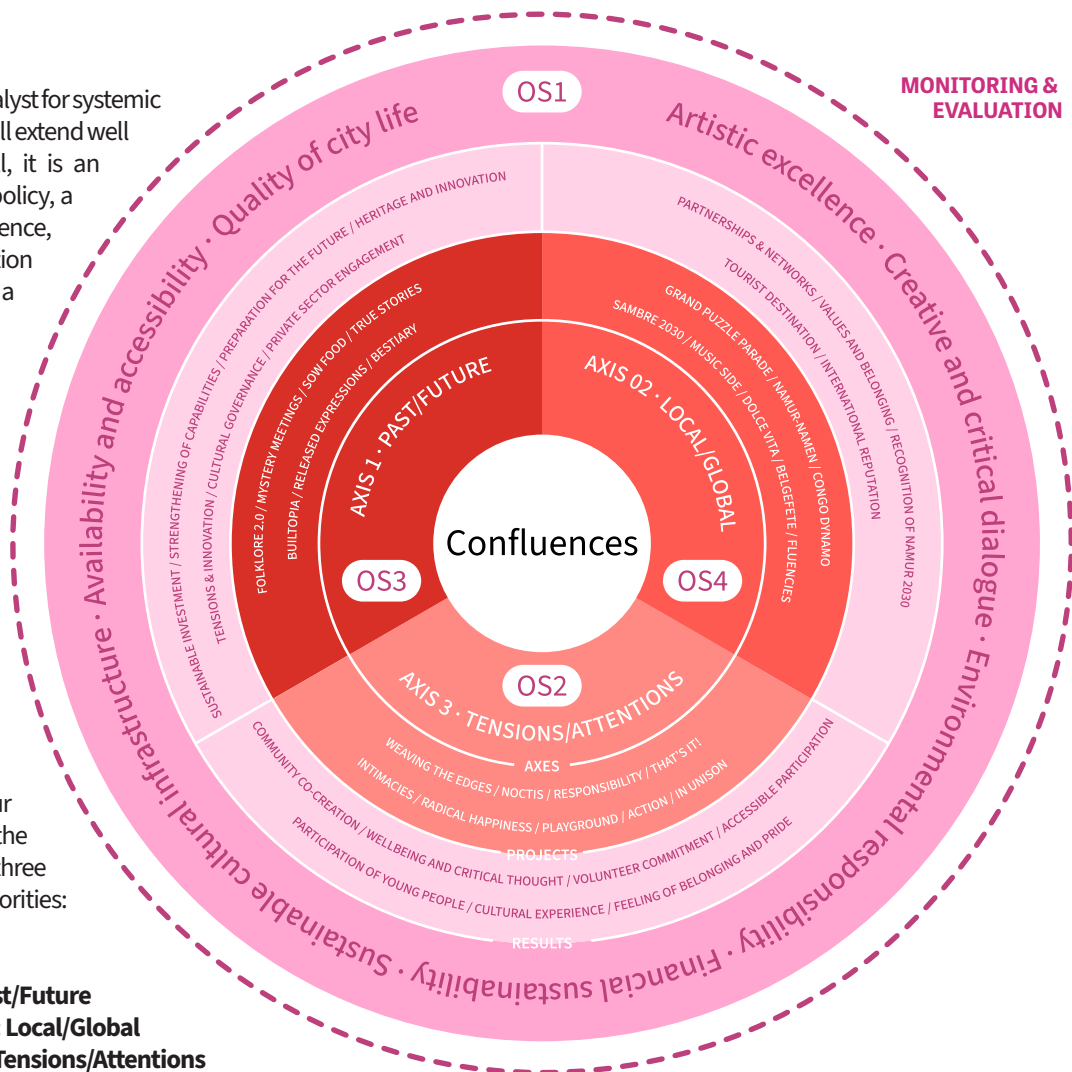
Already a driving force for unprecedented collaborations between dozens of local associations across all sectors, Namur 2030 is developing methods and protocols to bring different worlds together and enable them to work as one. This concerns:

- gender diversity: a real challenge for several folklore societies in Namur,
- connections between digital technology and folklore,
- promoting heritage through contemporary art projects,
- artistic transdisciplinarity,
- intergenerational projects,
- cross-sector projects,
- the cultural dimension working on behalf of other sectors, such as healthcare,
- projects connecting the cultural and business worlds,
- private investments in art and culture,
- partnerships and the sharing of resources between multiple providers,
- interactions between the cultural sector and the world of education,
- making cultural trade more professional,
- teaching languages and structuring the tourist offering around the cultural highlights of Namur,
- artistic projects on food and agriculture,
- guiding artists and structures in the search for funding, particularly from Europe (capacity building).

Namur2030 will be a catalyst for systemic change whose impact will extend well beyond 2030. Above all, it is an accelerator for cultural policy, a territory of artistic excellence, a pretext for a revolution in cultural rights and a step towards Europe. Overall, Namur 2030 is an opportunity rather than a consecration.

Our long-term objectives have not changed in essence; they have been strengthened thanks to the collective work on the bid. And our assessment plan has been refined and developed based on our transversal objective (the Confluence) and our three artistic programming priorities:

- **Axis Temporal : Past/Future**
- **Axis Geographical : Local/Global**
- **Axis Sociological : Tensions/Attentions**



OS1 CONFLUENCE

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE AND CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURES

Contrary to appearances, confluence is not a complex concept to evaluate and the impact it has can be felt in very tangible ways. Our entire project is based on confluence protocols aimed at breaking down barriers between sectors: artists, local people, cultural, economic, social, tourism, scientific and

digital stakeholders. This has led to new impulses among the population, within institutions and in the private sector. It has also resulted in long-term economic benefits and tools that can be shared with other European cities.

- 001.1** To offer carte blanche to local, regional and international artists to enable them to create innovative works by exploring temporal, geographical, and sociological tensions, while incorporating culture with education, youth and digitalisation.

LONG-TERM IMPACT:

Namur 2030 generates a rich and diverse body of works, reinventing the city through different tensions related to time, space and perception. These creations, with roots in education, digital culture and youth empowerment, make Namur a symbol of artistic freedom, cultural relevance and contemporary experimentation. The programme's lasting legacy lies in its intrinsic cultural value, its contribution to the city's creative dynamism and the inspiration it provides to future generations of artists and citizens.

RESULTS

Artistic excellence

N30 encourages a vibrant cultural scene where artists enjoy true creative freedom, personal fulfilment, innovation and great satisfaction in their work.

Creative and critical dialogue

N30 encourages artistic projects that explore cultural tensions, challenge perspectives, and foster critical dialogue.

Environmental responsibility

N30's cultural programme aims to set an example in terms of sustainability. Events incorporate eco-friendly practices and explicitly highlight their connection to environmental issues.

Financial sustainability

N30 provides solid and long-term financial support.

IMPACT INDICATORS

Total number of events ;
Number of events in each category;
Number of interdisciplinary projects (music, theatre, visual arts, digital arts);
Over 50% of artists report creative growth, innovation and satisfaction in their work.

Number of cultural projects exploring social, political or cultural tensions (e.g. migration, identity, climate change);
Number of public debates, meetings with artists or critical forums addressing the themes of cultural diversity, identity, innovation and heritage;
Perception of artistic freedom: % of artists who say they have been able to take creative risks in their projects;
Number of artworks combining traditional and contemporary forms, exploring the tension between past and present.

Environmental impact of N30;
Number of activities incorporating environmentally friendly practices;
Total number of programmes explicitly recognising and monitoring the impact of links between culture, environmental sustainability and economic sustainability.

Total budget for the cultural programme of N30;
Increase in financial contributions from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

001.2 Ensuring that cultural infrastructures are accessible, sustainable and adaptable

LONG-TERM IMPACT:

The investments made by Namur 2030 in iconic infrastructures such as *Tribune* (Center of Contemporary Art), *Rive* (Créative Centre), the Quai des Joghiers, the floating platform at the Confluence, the Stade des Jeux, the Théâtre de Verdu de la Citadelle, and the extension of the pedestrianised city centre will promote sustainable urban regeneration, economic revitalisation and environmentally friendly development. These inclusive, multifunctional spaces will become hubs for cultural life, community use and creative entrepreneurship, while contributing to greener mobility, improving the quality of public spaces and strengthening urban cohesion.

09

RESULTS

Sustainable cultural infrastructure

N30 invests in dynamic and sustainable cultural infrastructure, transforming public spaces through environmentally friendly design, renovation and long-term management.

Availability and accessibility

N30 ensures that cultural infrastructures are available to artists, while being accessible, inclusive and adaptable to different audiences.

Quality of city life

N30's cultural infrastructures improve the quality of life for residents.

IMPACT INDICATORS

New use of unused spaces, creation of new public spaces.
Economic and social value of investments in cultural infrastructure;
Environmental impact of developments related to N30 (carbon footprint, energy efficiency, environmentally friendly materials);
Percentage of cultural venues adopting sustainable practices (low-energy lighting, zero-waste policy, digital sustainability)
Number of cultural spaces certified as green or sustainable.

Increasing the availability of affordable spaces for cultural production (studios, etc.);
Increase in the availability of accessible spaces for cultural production (inclusive and accessible physically, mentally, socially and financially);
Number of cultural spaces equipped with inclusive accessibility features (ramps, subtitles, tactile exhibition).

Increase in the percentage of urban and rural residents who report having a positive relationship with cultural spaces;
Improvement in the wellbeing of residents in urban and rural areas.

LONG-TERM IMPACT:

Namur 2030 contributes to building a society, where cultural practices give a voice to marginalised populations and involve local people in the collective creation of purpose. Projects such as *Responsibility*, *Weaving the edges*, *That's it!*, *Intimacies*, and *Action* will promote a culture of empathy, intergenerational solidarity and youth engagement, while addressing issues of identity, justice and social care. This legacy reinforces the intrinsic value of culture as a space for expression and healing, contribute to sustainable social cohesion and encourage greater democratic participation.

002.1 Actively engage at least 30% of the city's population in cultural programmes, with a particular focus on co-creation with young people and audiences that are traditionally less involved.
RESULTS**Community co-creation**

Involve residents, citizen groups and cultural organisations in the design, co-creation and implementation of cultural activities, ensuring that at least 30% of participants come from groups that are traditionally underserved.

Wellbeing and critical thought

Improve participants' well-being and critical thinking skills.

Volunteer commitment

Recruit and support an active network of volunteers representing a diversity of ages and backgrounds, while ensuring a high retention rate.

Participation of young people

Ensure that at least 25% of participants are young people, with programmes for schools, youth organisations and young creators.

IMPACT INDICATORS

Increase civic participation in the N30 programme;
 Number of events and initiatives promoting active involvement and offering different levels of participation;
 Number and percentage of residents who co-created the programme;
 Number and quality of programmes involving audiences where the level of engagement is low

Increase in observed levels of wellbeing;
 Number of events designed to stimulate critical thinking;
 Number of activities addressing sensitive social issues;
 % of people reporting critical reflection or the acquisition of a new perspective.

Number of active volunteers;
 Sociodemographic profile of volunteers;
 Level of volunteer commitment.

Increase in the participation of schools in programmes;
 Number and percentage of young people actively participating in the N30;
 Number and percentage of young people involved in activities with a European dimension.

002.2 Ensure that at least 70% of the city's population has the opportunity to attend cultural events.
RESULTS**Cultural experience**

N30 offers a rich and diverse cultural programme that is accessible to all citizens.

Feeling of belonging and pride

N30 strengthens citizens' sense of cultural belonging and pride, contributing to greater social cohesion.

Accessible participation

N30 ensures that everyone can enjoy cultural experiences by removing financial or physical barriers.

IMPACT INDICATORS

Increase in attendance at events compared to the city's usual cultural audience;
 Demographic diversity of the audience;
 Increased awareness of cultural offerings;
 Geographical breakdown of the audience.

Emotional resonance of cultural experiences;
 Sense of pride and cultural roots (linked to wellbeing).

Number and quality of measures promoting wider participation (e.g. pricing policy, transport, communication);
 Number of events designed with accessible formats;
 Level of public satisfaction with programming.

LONG-TERM IMPACT:

Namur becomes a city where memory and creativity coexist sustainably, enabling continuous reflection on heritage, identity and responsibility. By linking tradition and innovation – through projects such as *Bestiary*, *Released Expressions*, *Folklore 2.0* or *Sambre 2030 - Namur 2030* establishes a culture of critical thinking, ecological responsibility and intergenerational dialogue in artistic and civic life. This dynamic contributes to environmental sustainability, political innovation and intergenerational cohesion, while strengthening the economic impact of cultural and creative industries, supporting digital innovation and anchoring youth participation in public life. Together, these elements will make Namur a city where creation inspires civic responsibility and sustainable resilience.

- 003.1** Provide 300 cultural professionals and the surrounding region with opportunities for capacity-building, including targeted programmes to improve digital, managerial and audience engagement skills, with a satisfaction rate of 60% or more reporting an improvement in their skills.

RESULTS**Sustainable investment**

N30 guarantees long-term funding and strategic support for the cultural sector, enabling cultural organisations to develop, innovate and thrive.

Strengthening of capabilities

N30 strengthens and broadens the skills and expertise of cultural professionals, ensuring a highly skilled, resilient and diverse cultural sector.

Preparation for the future

N30 strengthens the digital readiness and future adaptability of the cultural and creative sector by developing digital skills and the capacity for innovation.

Heritage and innovation

N30 encourages the creative reinterpretation of cultural heritage, establishing strong links between local and international cultural stakeholders.

IMPACT INDICATORS

Increase in cultural spending by the City of Namur;
Growth in GDP and employment in the cultural and creative sectors;
Total value of investments in programmes.

Quantity, quality and sustainability of capacity-building programmes (number of participants, feedback from participants, etc.);
Better gender balance and increased diversity among cultural professionals (measured as a percentage of women, people from minority backgrounds and young people).

Increase in the number and percentage of graduates from cultural and creative sectors (CCS) working or remaining in Namur;
Number and profile of cultural professionals trained in digital production tools, platforms and methods;
Number and quality of cross-sector innovation projects linking culture, digital technology, or creative industries (e.g. digital residencies, augmented exhibitions).

Increase in the number of cultural initiatives combining heritage and innovation;
Investments in cultural heritage infrastructure; number of heritage sites refurbished or repurposed;
Strengthening skills in these fields.

- 003.2** Establish 30 partnerships between the cultural sector and fields of education, technology, tourism, economics and health, while integrating participatory governance practices into Cultural Strategy.

RESULTS**Tensions & Innovation**

N30 promotes meaningful cross-sector collaborations between the cultural sector and other fields such as education, technology, tourism, economics and health.

Cultural governance

N30 establishes a long-term strategic cultural policy that promotes sustainable cultural development, encourages innovation between sectors and integrates inclusive governance practices by actively involving civil society, cultural organisations and public institutions in transparent and participatory decision-making processes.

Private Sector Engagement

N30 redefines the role of sponsors by embedding them as active co-creators in the cultural ecosystem, encouraging long-term, values-driven partnerships.

IMPACT INDICATORS

Number and sustainability of established cross-sector partnerships;
Number and quality of cross-sector cultural projects exploring tensions between the arts and other sectors;
Number and attendance of cross-sector knowledge-sharing events.

Future cultural strategy;
Increase in cultural spending by the City;
Civil society organisations working with the local authority;
Consultation with cultural and civil society organisations;
Increase in civic participation and trust in local institutions.

Number of co-created cultural projects involving private sector partners;
Number of engagement events with business (e.g. forums, labs, strategic roundtables);
Number and diversity of private sector partners (e.g. SMEs, large firms, sectoral federations);
Sponsorship contribution proportion of the total programme budget.

LONG-TERM IMPACT:

Namur positions itself as a dynamic and forward-looking cultural city that has both strong local roots and is internationally connected. Through programmes such as *Fluencies*, *Namur-Namen*, *Builtopia* and *Music Side*, Namur 2030 strengthens cross-border collaboration, encourages digital and physical mobility, and repositions the city's image, transforming it from a peripheral location into a centre for cultural diplomacy and innovation. This focus will generate social and economic benefits by stimulating tourism, international partnerships and cultural entrepreneurship, while strengthening the sense of European belonging and the image of the city.

- 004.1** Design a diverse programme and networks involving at least 50 cultural projects developed with European partners, joint performances, co-productions, exhibitions and residencies.

RESULTS**Partnerships & Networks**

N30 is developing a dynamic European cultural programme centred around performances, co-productions, exhibitions, residencies and networks, establishing long-term collaborations with more than 20 European institutions beyond 2030.

Values and belonging

N30 has established itself as a recognised centre for European cultural diversity and exchange, offering an artistic programme that is rich in both geographical and thematic diversity. This programme promotes cross-border collaboration, critical dialogue and a shared sense of European identity and belonging.

IMPACT INDICATORS

Number of European artists and professionals involved;
Number of local artists and professionals participating in international projects;
Number of cultural projects developed with European partners;
Number of new and sustainable international partnerships;
Increased success rate of international funding;
Increase in income from international grant applications;
Number of European partnerships maintained beyond 2030.

Geographical area of the arts programme;
Number of projects highlighting European diversity, identity, migration and common values;
Number of intercultural dialogue events involving local residents and international artists;
Number of grassroots initiatives and intercultural storytelling projects developed with European partners;
% of citizens reporting a better understanding and appreciation of European cultures and identity.

- 004.2** Promote the visibility and attractiveness of Namur by raising awareness among the general public, developing sustainable cultural tourism and enhancing the city's international reputation.

RESULTS**Recognition of N30**

N30 strengthens public recognition of Namur's status as ECoC and consolidates its reputation among citizens, cultural professionals and European stakeholders.

Tourist destination

N30 attracts domestic and international tourists by offering high-quality cultural experiences, while stimulating the city's cultural economy and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

International reputation

N30 strengthens its international reputation as a dynamic, creative and sustainable cultural city, benefiting from extensive positive media coverage.

IMPACT INDICATORS

Awareness of local residents and professionals in the cultural and creative sector about the existence of the ECoC;
Recognition of the ECoC as asset for the city and its reputation, by citizens and professionals.

Increase in the number of visitors (overnight stays, both nationally and internationally);
Improvement in the wellbeing of visitors;
Environmental, social and economic impact of N30;
Total number of programmes explicitly promoting the link between N30 and sustainable tourism.

Improvement of Namur's ranking in the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor (index 15.6);
Number and profile of people reached by media coverage and geographical range of this coverage;
Volume and % of positive media coverage concerning Namur and/or its cultural offering.

WHO WILL LEAD THE ASSESSMENT?

Namur Cultural Observatory, hosted at the University of Namur, conducts monitoring and assessment (M&E) in conjunction with international partners, including Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU – UK), as well as other leading institutions. Namur Cultural Observatory is governed by a structure on several layers aimed at ensuring both academic rigour and community involvement:

- **International Scientific Committee:** headed by Dr Rafaela Ganga (LJMU), author of this M&E strategy, based on her expertise in cultural value (Ganga, 2022). This committee includes 4 international co-researchers (KU Leuven (BE), Université de Rouen (FR), HEC Montréal (CA) and Arizona State University (USA) which provide strategic guidance and review monitoring and evaluation reports. The committee meets monthly online and annually in person, with the chair attending the annual meeting of the Namur 2030 committee.
- **Confluences Panel:** participatory body made up of citizens, cultural and tourism stakeholders, youth representatives, social innovators and leaders from Namur and its region. The panel meets in person every quarter to ensure that the evaluation reflects the diversity of experiences.
- **Local evaluation team (University of Namur):** headed by Professor Alain Decrop, this team comprises four co-researchers providing expert supervision and four PhD students responsible for field research and data analysis (cultural policy, tourism, economics, sustainability, data science, heritage, arts and culture, and management)
- **M&E Officer for Namur 2030:** the person responsible for collecting internal data and managing data sharing management and communication between Namur 2030 and the Namur Cultural Observatory.

WHAT OBJECTIVES AND MILESTONES WILL BE INCLUDED IN YOUR ASSESSMENT PLAN BETWEEN YOUR APPOINTMENT AND THE YEAR OF ECOC?

Knowledge emerges when people, ideas, cultures, generations and environments meet, mix and influence each other. Through **Confluences**, we become stronger. Figures and statistics are important for telling the story of Namur 2030's legacy, but stories, experiences, emotions and reflections are just as important. That is why our monitoring and evaluation approach is participatory, pluralistic and dynamic, in line with the relational philosophy that is at the heart of Namur 2030. We want the spirit of Confluences to permeate every aspect of Namur 2030's approach to M&E.

Our **objectives** are the following:

- **01 : To document the cultural, social, ecological and economic impact of N30** (cultural participation, wellbeing, sustainable practices, social cohesion, digital inclusion and economic vitality at local, regional and European levels)
- **02 : To track the contribution of N30 to the construction of a city that is resilient, inclusive and sustainable** (creation of sustainable cultural infrastructure, strengthening civic engagement, accelerating the ecological transition and developing European ties)
- **03 : To support adaptive learning and participatory governance throughout the process** (real-time feedback loops to inform decision-making, improve project implementation, and ensure that citizens, artists, young people, and partners are co-owners of the learning process)
- **04 : To capture the diversity of experiences and stories derived from Confluences** (measurable results and real-life testimonials, critical reflections and emotional impacts, ensuring that all voices are represented, including those that are least heard)

- **05 : To establish a cross-sector legacy of knowledge, methodologies and partnerships for the future** (good practices, lessons learned and innovations to inform future cultural policies, urban strategies and international cultural cooperation beyond 2030)

Our **Theory of Change** frames the strategic vision of Namur 2030 as a living and relational process of cultural, social, economic and ecological transformation, made possible by *Confluences*. Our **Logic Model** puts this vision into operation by translating it into inputs, activities, expected outcomes and impacts. Examples:

Input — Core resources and partnerships (e.g. funding, professional team, partnerships, physical and digital infrastructure)

Activities — Cultural programme and mediation activities (e.g. *Folklore 2.0*, *Weaving the edges*, *F(r)ictions*, *Now it's our turn!*)

Results — Practical achievements and indicators (e.g. number of co-created cultural events, number of national and international visitors, carbon footprint)

Short-term effects (2026–2029) — Consequences before the event (e.g. increased cultural participation, skills development, particularly among young people, emerging artists and volunteers)

Medium-term effects (2030–2031) — Post-event consequences (e.g. strengthened social cohesion and increased sense of belonging among Namur residents, capacity-building in the cultural sector, improved impact on tourism (increase in visitor numbers), positive economic spin-offs: job creation, development of cultural and creative industries, support for local businesses)

Long-term impact (beyond 2031) — Sustainable transformation (e.g. Namur recognised as a model city for cultural democracy and sustainable innovation, European sustainable networks, culture of participation, critical

creativity and ecological responsibility embedded in public life, thriving cultural economy with robust creative industries, resilient local businesses and sustainable tourism practices.

OUR DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

Our strategy is aimed at integrating the results of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into Namur 2030's public communication, in order to ensure the accessibility and impact of the knowledge produced.

- **Digital platforms and social networks:** the N30 website, social media channels, and app will share updates, articles, podcasts, and videos to engage the public in real-time.
- **Annual reports and final report:** starting in 2026, annual public reports will present the key results of the M&E, in line with the European Commission's monitoring schedule. These reports will include achievements, challenges, lessons learned and emerging impacts.
- **Political recommendations:** each report will be accompanied by targeted fact sheets and strategic notes, and public policy laboratories will be organised with partners (University of Namur, NaDI) to integrate the results into urban strategies, digital innovation and sustainability initiatives.

— **Academic publications & conferences:** the research results will be shared through scientific articles (e.g. Cultural Trends), presentations at major events (European Sociological Association, European Network on Cultural Management and Policy, International Association of Arts and Cultural Management). Launch and final international conferences (2026 and 2031) to promote global knowledge exchange

— **Participation by postgraduate students:** master's students, PhD students and young researchers will be involved in collaborative research projects.

— **International networks:** N30 will be linked to networks such as UNESCO Creative Cities, Culture Next, Culture Action Europe, etc. to contribute to the global ecosystem of cultural innovation, sustainability and citizen engagement.

WHICH REFERENCE STUDIES OR SURVEYS DO YOU INTEND TO USE?

Namur 2030 establishes its reference baseline by combining Namur's Cultural Strategy with existing regional, national and European data, as well as new city-wide data collection starting in 2026. Should there be anything missing, the Namur Cultural Observatory develops targeted baseline studies covering cultural participation, well-being, accessibility, sustainability, citizens' perceptions, tourism and (youth) employment in the cultural and creative sectors.

City-related data is currently fragmented and limited to major events. However, Namur benefits from a robust open data ecosystem, recognised by multiple awards for its commitment to open data practices. The city works closely with the University of Namur, where several courses and research projects make direct use of Namur's open data platform. This platform covers various areas, including cultural participation, environmental impact, mobility, social services and digital connectivity. Taking full advantage of this rich open data infrastructure enables Namur 2030 to effectively monitor the evolution of key quantitative indicators while adding new indicators explicitly linked to the ECoC project.

At a **regional level**, data comes from the Cultural Policy Observatory (OPC), the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Directorate-General for Culture), the Walloon Institute for Evaluation, Forecasting and Statistics (IWEPS), and Visit Wallonia).

At a **national level**, statistics are available from Statbel, while European and international references include Eurobarometer surveys, the OECD Better Life Index, ESPON reports, Eurostat cultural statistics and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics.



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HOW WILL YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

The success of Namur 2030 is defined by three interconnected deadlines – short term (2026–2029), medium term (2030–2031) and long term (beyond 2035)

– and directly linked to the long-term impact (Q3) and the achievement of our four Strategic Objectives (SO).

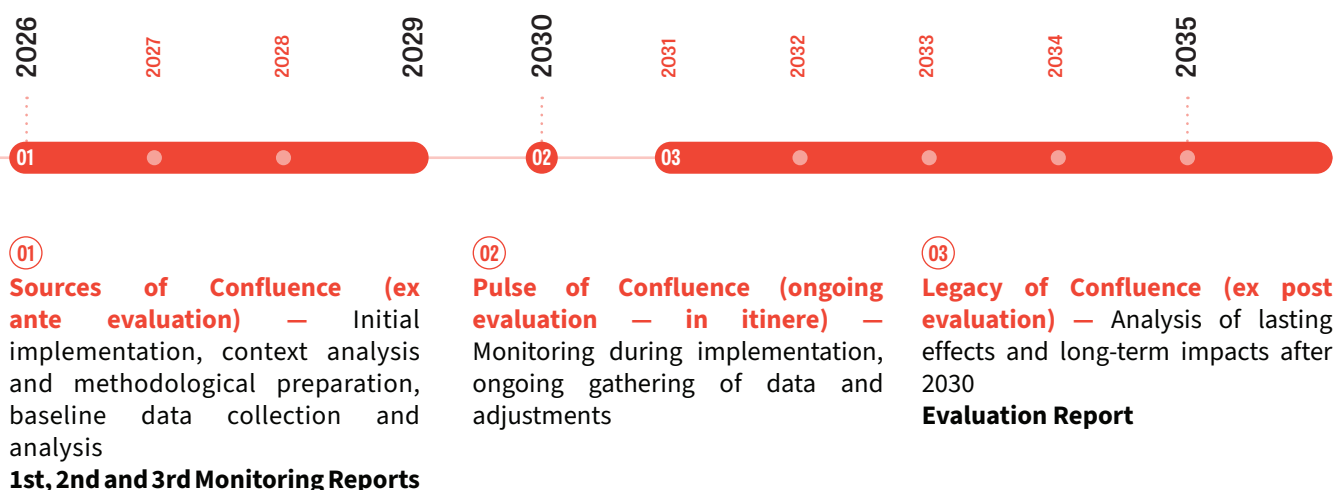
In the short term — success consists of offering a diverse, high-quality cultural programme that bridges the past and the present, with artists exploring cultural heritage through contemporary forms, while encouraging the active participation of local and global communities.

In the medium term — success is measured by transformative cultural experiences that engage residents in critical dialogue, embracing tension and focus by addressing complex themes and diverse perspectives.

In the long term — success means leaving a lasting legacy of creative excellence, cultural literacy, social cohesion and sustainable cultural infrastructure, with Namur recognised as a model city for cultural democracy, where the Confluences continue to flow, bringing together diverse voices, ideas and cultures.

OVER WHAT PERIOD AND HOW FREQUENTLY WILL THE EVALUATION BE CONDUCTED?

The monitoring and assessment strategy for Namur 2030 will extend from **January 2026 to December 2031**, in three key phases:



WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU MONITOR?

The Monitoring & Evaluation Matrix for Namur 2030 ensures rigorous and reliable assessment of operations, linking strategic and operational objectives to measurable indicators. The M&E matrix is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, in line with the European Commission's guidelines for city assessment (2018). In addition, each project within Namur 2030 is labelled with one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring that cultural activities contribute to the overall sustainability objectives and enabling the assessment of their broader social, environmental and economic impacts.

Namur 2030 uses a mixed approach to capture the full extent of the cultural impact:

- **Quantitative methods** include programme data analysis, cost-benefit analysis, surveys (e.g. of residents, artists, visitors and cultural professionals), social return on investment, ticket sales data,

- customer relationship management (CRM) data, and statistical data sets (from national, regional and local authorities, including the OECD Better Life Index).
- **Qualitative methods** involve focus groups, in-depth interviews, ethnographic fieldwork, document analysis, governance reviews and peer assessments.
- **Creative methods** such as artistic research, emotional mapping workshops, social photography and storytelling sessions will be used to explore lived experiences, emotional responses and local narratives.

02

Cultural and
artistic content/

Q/05

ARTISTIC VISION AND STRATEGY FOR THE
NAMUR 2030 CULTURAL PROGRAMME

While our artistic strategy remains unchanged, our vision has become clearer. Namur 2030 is not just a major regional project that uses art and culture to draw attention to the tensions at play and transform them for the betterment of all. It is also a project that consciously and conscientiously uses methods to resolve these tensions in order to draw lessons that can be applied on a larger scale. With this in mind, Namur 2030's aim is to be a **Laboratory of Confluences**.

The main change to what has happened between the shortlist stage and today is that the definition of what constitutes a **Confluence** for Namur 2030 has been expanded, made more tangible, consistent and easier to communicate. Today, we can say that Confluence allows us to rethink:

- **temporal** differences that prompt us to contrast the past and the future, tradition and modernity, folklore and digital technology;
- **geographical** differences that prompt us to differentiate between what is local and what is global, between firm establishment and openness, protecting what is close to us and defending what is far away;
- **sociological** or perceptible differences that takes us to stand out from the crowd, or even to separate ourselves into communities or individuals.

As part of our programme, we summarise them as

- *Past/Future*
- *Local/Global*
- *Tensions/Attentions*

Because Confluence is the idea of perceiving the world in a way other than as divisions between

- *periods of history* in opposition to each other,
- *territories with frontiers* that try to set us apart,
- *human characteristics* that would differentiate us from others.

Confluence is resistance —

Suggesting that people should be brought together through art and culture means providing a foundation that is both symbolic and tangible for transforming society. This foundation is absolutely essential if we are to bring about profound, perceptible changes, such as ending discrimination and eradicating all forms of violence. It also means changes that are not so perceptible, such as sharing more empathetic, supportive and peaceful emotions. That's why Confluence appears to be an active form of strength. We need to counterbalance the most widespread discriminatory, separatist and supremacist ideas and the emotions they generate, such as fear, mistrust, resignation and indifference.

Confluence is an art — To resist, our call goes out to artists and performers, as well as their utopias. It is no longer simply a matter of stating things, but of putting them into practice. That is why artistic research, excellence and freedom are at the heart of our project. Artists are at the core of Namur 2030, observing things, denouncing them, but also initiating new gestures, new practices and new ways of thinking. It is with this in mind that we are interested, through their eyes, not only in the disciplines we expect to see, but also in folklore, nightlife and celebrations, all of which are powerful rituals and collective moments that engage the body and rekindle bonds between us. What matters is to generate aesthetic and poetic power, to shift perspectives and, who knows, perhaps even to bring people together along the way.

We are involving artists and performers for their boldness, their vision, and their willingness to embrace hybridisation. We make ourselves available to them and strengthen their capabilities through initiatives that involve both local artists (see *Rocket* described in Q/09 & Q/10), as well as artists who come from cities that are creative in the digital arts (see the residences of *F(r)ictions* described in Q/06).

With this in mind, Namur 2030 aims to strengthen the digital arts ecosystem,

which is already a leader on an international scale (Q/02). Through a cross-disciplinary project *F(r)ictions*, which brings together international curating and creation via large-scale calls for projects, we intend to demonstrate that technologies are not just tools, but vectors of experience in their own right. Digital tools are becoming increasingly commonplace for promoting and preserving tangible and intangible heritage. We have mastered these aspects and continue to develop our expertise in this field (see Q/08). And yet we go further than this. Immersive, interactive and reflective, the technologies used by the Namur 2030 artists and performers enrich the relationship between art and audiences. They affirm the political and poetic role played by digital art and its ability to reinvent living interfaces. They also create new forms of relationships and confluences where the future can be explored in new ways. In this sense, Confluence in Namur is also a form of digital art.

Confluence is a method — The artists and projects in general are being selected using three specific methods: curation, calls for projects and participatory processes, as explained in Q/07. In all instances, the projects are drivers of connections. But more specifically, we will be inviting a large number of artists and performers, both local and international, to co-invent (or replicate in Namur) collective creation protocols, in order to give tangible form to our aim to make Namur 2030 a genuine Laboratory of Confluences.

That's why a large part of the artistic approach promoted by Namur 2030 is based on the principle of cooperation. Beyond the cultural cooperation that already exists in the region, we advocate breaking down barriers between all the driving forces: between cultural, community, social, academic, medical and tourism operators; between citizens and artists; between towns and villages; between established structures and alternative projects; between the public and private sectors; and between the local and European levels. On this last point, therefore, Confluence is also a European method (Q/11 & 13).

To pool our respective strengths, we need to have protocols and laboratory facilities, on both a small and large scale. This is what we put in place: collective local diagnoses (*Little Connexits*, *Confluence Hubs*, chapter 4), sensitive maps published by several hundred children (*Dolce Vita*), a community cinema film (*Action*), a large-scale collection of photographic material (*Intimacies*), the co-construction of shelters in the countryside (*Shelters*); commissions by citizens, including one about folklore; the self-management of sustainable infrastructure (*Rive*); the co-management of local places (*Little Connexits*); inclusive editorial committees to create our monthly newspaper (within the Communication Unit, Q/39); participatory curating processes (*Responsibility*), participatory budgets (*Little Connexits*), tailored support for young people in their involvement in various projects (*Slow Opening*, *Released Expressions*, *Music Side*, *Playground*), media literacy workshops for adults (*True Stories*), dance, singing and foreign language classes.

The challenge lies not only in the artistic projects themselves, but above all in the way in which they emerge. In some cases, the process is placed on an equal footing with the end result. Everywhere, attention is paid to consistency with the

City's long-term strategy for the wider area; the fieldwork of partners; diversity within teams and project governance; ecological transition issues; the ability to resonate with the local people (chapter 4) and with European values and partners (chapter 3).

Our aim is to improve the skills of local cultural providers. Through a capacity building programme, we will support socio-cultural operators, the local creative scene, communities, volunteers and teams involved in cultural, international, digital and sustainable issues by providing them with tools, training spaces and opportunities for collaboration, with a view to fostering the emergence of a more autonomous, inclusive and resilient local ecosystem (Q/09 & 10).

Living with the contradictions inherent in working with audiences in all their diversity and numbers is a challenge. Converging or merging does not mean diluting oneself in the other and cancelling each other out. This legitimate fear is what guides our protocols. Exploring new forms of organisation and creation is no easy task and requires the ability to engage the human faculties of the territory and to move forward with humility, patience and agility. To be carried by visionary artists and yet have a sensitive ear open for everyone.

Confluence is an experience — So, for everyone involved in these various processes, as well as for the general public, Confluence will be an unforgettable experience. Where exactly will all these events take place? Art in public spaces is now one of the most widely accepted responses to the question of making culture more available to a broader audience and Namur 2030 wishes to play a full part in this dynamic, which addresses issues related to social diversity, civic awareness and accessibility to works of art. But is creating art outdoors enough to forge links? Public spaces tend to become privatised areas, shut off from the general public and covered with commercial images. In this context, artists have a responsibility that goes beyond simply occupying these spaces. It's a question of **creating public spaces** that become hubs promoting the experience of encounter. These are places that are both inherited and invented, where the concept of dialogue is central to the whole idea. Because while any public space can accommodate artistic forms, an artistic gesture truly takes on meaning if it is able to relate to its context, if it reveals what we can no longer see, if it allows us to rediscover what was there before, in plain sight and yet so invisible.

This desire to share and encourage experiences outside usual exhibition venues and cultural spaces is central to our entire project. *Bestiary*, *Responsibility*, *Sambre 2030*, are our projects dealing with the folklores of yesterday and tomorrow, our political and poetic interpretation of the night or our banquets centred around the food of the future. This diversity of approaches ensures that we have a **multiplicity of perspectives and forms** that can be discovered in the very places where they were conceived. We prefer this density to large, ready-made international exhibitions, which we feel are less conducive to co-construction and mediation.

We also take the same approach with the performing arts, favouring projects that establish a special bond between the performers and the audiences watching. An unconventional setting for performances allows for the creation of a new dialogue. This is what we are trying to bring to life in the programming of *Dolce Vita*, in *Mystery Meetings*, during *Slow Opening* of course, in *Builtopia*, with *Little Connexits* and through *Namur-Namen*.

What's more, in an area already affected by extreme weather events (periods of drought, flooding, heatwaves), choosing to hold events outdoors also means considering measures for making changes where necessary. This is part of the City's long-term strategy for offering an alternative to major events in the area that might face similar weather-related risks (Q/02). In this case, this means providing somewhere to shelter refuge in areas that are protected from the effects of weather or climate hazards. Namur Expo (12,000 m²), located in the heart of the city, will remain available to host the many outdoor events planned for 2030 indoors if necessary, ensuring that the celebrations can go ahead as planned.

Confluence is a celebration — Because in Namur, as elsewhere in Wallonia, we just love a great celebration – something that is passed down from generation to generation. It is with a view to passing on this tradition, supported by a long-term strategic vision, that we have put children and youngsters at the heart of Namur 2030. Young people aged 0-25 appear in events at all levels, not only as audiences to whom cultural offerings should be presented, but as partners in governance, creative forces and political voices in their own right (chapter 4). Strengthening mutual trust between the generations (Q/08) and strengthening young people's ties with Europe (Q/11) are also among our aims.

We firmly believe that children and young people must be given the opportunity to participate fully in shaping the city and building its culture as a driving force. We need to transform the Province and City of Namur to make them more resilient to the world of tomorrow, particularly in light of the impacts caused by climate change. And to make these transitions happen, we need youngsters and their unique 'punk' energy. Now – not 'when they grow up', as we often tell them.

The whole of this initiative, called **Now it's our turn!**, can be found in chapter 4. Suffice it to say here that its aim is to celebrate the unique perspective of every child and young person, regardless of their age or background, so that they can find their role, their voice and their place to think, create and act.

Confluence is a responsibility — It can therefore be said that confluence is an approach that aims to take responsibility for future generations and for **ecological transition**. Beyond the strategic framework outlined in Q/02, the issue of ecology is a constant focus that we address as part of the artistic programme for Namur 2030 through **five major artistic levers**.

First, through the **cooperative method**, described above, which enables us to create sustainable ecosystems that benefit everyone.

Next, through **powerful themes**: the environmental crisis is at the heart of many parts of our programme. *Sow Food* explores the imagination relating to sustainable food. *Bestiary* questions our relationship with living things. *Dolce Vita* examines our relationship with the everyday environment. *True Stories* deconstructs media narratives, including those surrounding climate change, one of the topics most prone to misinformation. And our *Solar Nights* reveal their sensitive and symbolic dimensions.

Lever three: **tangible and measurable choices**. Beyond the carbon budget mentioned in chapter 1, our artistic choices incorporate principles of moderation, from the design stage onwards: like *Slow Opening* and the *Grand Puzzle Parade*. These unifying events do not succumb to the siren call of large-scale spectacle; instead, they pool resources, warehouses and technical spaces with operators, consider the travel arrangements of the artists working on the programme, use recycled materials and plan ahead for their further recycling and even share tours using the *CooProg platform*, which is designed as an 'open source' for sustainable programming.

Attention is also paid to the challenges of **adaptation**: in addition to Namur Expo's plan B for outdoor events, a number of projects are being designed as prototypes for a changing world. *Little Connexits* can be reactivated as emergency shelters. *Shelters* become shared spaces for resilience. *Playground* has been created with extreme weather conditions in mind. Even the monumental work of *Responsibility* incorporates criteria of sustainability and reversibility.

Then, finally, we come to the **digital** dimension, which is part of Namur's identity and which will take form based on the challenges of responsible digital technology in *Responsible Digital Laboratory*: modest consumption, creation of commons, critical awareness. Thinking about the ecological transition today also means questioning the digital models of tomorrow. For Namur 2030, this is a tension in its own right, one that is not limited to our artistic programme as such and which we discuss in more detail in chapter 3.





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Q/06

STRUCTURE OF THE CULTURAL PROGRAMME, INCLUDING THE SCOPE AND DIVERSITY OF ACTIVITIES/EVENTS THAT WILL MARK THE YEAR

The concept for our year, under the heading of “Namur 2030, Territory of Confluences” and which is defined on the basis of the long-term objectives of Namur 2030 and which draws on a clear artistic vision, has given rise to an artistic programme structured around three main themes. Each of these three themes defines tensions and even conflicts that are shaking not only Namur to the core, but which also are affecting many other regions across Europe. (Q/11). Tensions that the Confluences aim to address.

Our programme currently includes more than 20 projects, each designed as a practical artistic response to the tensions we have identified. The responses provided

by the artistic projects are often multidimensional, drawing on notions of connection, care and our renewed relationship with life. Care, Bonding, Living world: these three concepts were our previous way of putting our programme into categories. These closely related concepts actually expressed different facets of the same thought: that of culture as a tool for Confluences. Caring, bonding and reconnecting with the living world are all ways of acting that actually appear across all our projects. The new structure provides a clearer overview of our artistic programme, which explores contemporary tensions in order to overcome them. To create Confluence.

PAST/ ————— FUTURE

Axis 1. Temporal — Temporal interpretation questions the link between memory and the future, tradition and emerging creation. Our proposal: the past and the future cannot exist without each other. They are not opposed. This approach opens up a vast field of possibilities by building bridges and exploiting the friction between tradition and innovation, heritage and the contemporary, and, of course, folklore and digital technology. Asking questions about era also forces us to consider our responsibility towards future generations and the planet we are passing on to them.

PROJECTS CONCERNED

Folklore 2.0, Mystery Meetings, Sow Food, True Stories, Builtopia, Released Expressions, Bestiary.

LOCAL/ ————— GLOBAL

Axis 2. Geographical — Geographical interpretation explores the tensions between local deep-rootedness and openness to the world. How can we fully belong to a territory and be European? What seems like a contradiction is in fact an essential complementarity. Could we be rooted in our territory without an awareness of the space in which it exists? This geographical approach enables us to explore questions of points of view and to look at the whole thing differently. It also means we can question our ties with those close to us, with those far away and what we consider to be ‘home’.

PROJECTS CONCERNED

Sambre 2030, Music Side, Dolce Vita, Grand Puzzle Parade, Namur-Namen, BELGefête, Congo Dynamo, Fluencies.

TENSIONS/ ————— ATTENTIONS

Axis 3. Sociological — Sociological interpretation is rooted in paying attention to others, highlighting marginalised voices and creating new commons. Our societies are riven by multiple tensions and even deep divisions related to how we define ourselves and form communities. Artists know better than anyone how to work with these sensitive issues, reflecting the complexity of things, imagining places of support and moments of sharing, protocols for co-creation or long-term exploration, and placing oneself in a position of care, working on behalf of the invisible, the marginalised and the most vulnerable.

PROJECTS CONCERNED

Weaving the edges, Noctis, Responsibility, That's it!, Intimacies, Radical Happiness, Playground, Action, In unison.

CROSS-CUTTING PROJECTS

Slow opening, F(r)ictions, Rocket.

Before moving on to look at these projects as a whole, we describe our opening ceremony called *Slow Opening* and present our transversal digital project *F(r)ictions*.

SLOW OPENING WEEKEND OF 1ST FEBRUARY

It's all about opening slowly and building up to a crescendo. Namur, city of snails, has an ancient secret recipe: slow, measured steps, lingering looks and silences that speak volumes. As the saying goes, the people of Namur are slow and deliberate. Although this reputation has sometimes weighed heavily on us in this age of speed, we are now adopting it as a jewel to cherish and make the theme of our opening ceremony. So we will be starting the festivities slowly as a guarantee of getting to the essential that follows.

On 1st February 2030 on the Meuse, we will turn on the lights one by one, like fireflies. Slowly. Then, for 48 hours, the city will be freed from the sound of engines and fall quiet. Slow travel takes centre stage. The streets become spaces (again) where strolling is an art form, where encounters with artistic offerings are unexpected, where magic lingers. Then the parade can begin, very slowly, symbolising an uninterrupted traffic jam of human-powered vehicles: bicycles, carts, delivery tricycles, balance bikes, customised pushchairs and homemade contraptions, creating absurd, joyful and humorous scenes.

Citizens, shopkeepers, city and provincial services, schools, sports clubs and all local associations are invited to take part in the festivities and invent their own mobile installations: a mobile tea room pulled by a bicycle, a small sauna on wheels with steam escaping from it, a trailer converted into a dance floor, a yoga corner on a rolling platform, a tandem for newlyweds, etc. Everything moves very slowly, like a phantom traffic jam. But, best of all – it's great fun. The motorist's nightmare becomes a space of freedom for pedestrians, a playful and collective repurposing of the city (already in the process of being pedestrianised in several places). It's a way of questioning the place of cars in the city.

Rather than one large centralised gathering, the festivities will take place everywhere. No need to endure the crowds, the experience is there to be lived to the fullest wherever you have to be. Getting around is all part of the exploration process: an acoustic concert at the end of Rue des Fossés Fleuris, an exhibition under the Jambes footbridge, a brass band in Saint-Loup Church, a contemporary circus in a retirement home, a live performance at the Piano Bar, the Théâtre de Namur transformed into a giant dance floor, and much more. Fragmentation creates a deeper cohesion, where everyone is able to find their own place, their own space. The city is no longer content to act as the host to the celebrations and happiness; instead it becomes their very essence.

In the autumn of 2027, 18-25-year-olds will join working groups committed to preparing the opening ceremony . In

these groups, they will explore, construct and tell stories. The working sessions will combine training, meetings, research and improvisation. Youngsters who are said always to be in a hurry, addicted to screens or disengaged from the real world, find themselves at the controls right across the territory. From Dinant to Philippeville, from Rochefort to Gembloux. In Jambes and the Namur suburb of Belgrade, too, young people from refugee centres will be getting involved. The very people we are supposed to be welcoming are themselves the hosts as they co-organise this great opening ceremony. Involvement levels are high, and as the deadline approaches, local artistic forces spring into action. The Namur Academy of Fine Arts is committed to the visual arts. The Balthasar-Florence Conservatory, with its 5 000 students of all ages, contributes to the staging. Set designs are created in collaboration with the Ressourcerie Namuroise and IATA. The Exergo collective, accompanied by students from IMEP, is putting together an accessible musical programme. Added to this are all the major cultural operators in the territory, who will open their doors and participate actively in hosting the programmes and sets created by young people.

And because this opening night promises to be a turning point and a showcase of artistic excellence, the orchestration of events has been entrusted to an internationally renowned artistic director, selected by the committee of young people who have been guiding this adventure since the beginning. This artistic director will coordinate this special evening, designed as a shifting point of balance, where the need to slow down, so strong in our societies, comes into direct contact with the enthusiasm and raw creativity of youth.

As for the closing ceremony of 2030, it is still too early to make plans. Throughout the year, the people of Namur will have danced, explored and rediscovered their territory. They will have learned other languages, created new spaces for socialising, invented new rituals, built fleets and so much more. One thing we are certain of: we want to thank them all. Today, we are only able to imagine this symbolic moment as being marked by a great festive celebration, a place where we can all come together to express our collective gratitude in thunderous unison.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Residents, shopkeepers, City of Namur, Province of Namur, schools, sports clubs, local associations, Namur Academy of Fine Arts, Balthasar-Florence Conservatory, Ressourcerie Namuroise, IATA, IMEP, HEAJ, KIKK, University of Namur, youth-led artistic collectives from Namur, youth committee, Kiruna (SE), Lublin (PL).

F(R)ICTIONS

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

The concept of 'friction' is closely linked to that of Confluence. Through *F(r)ictions*, we are making our mark on the digital ecosystem, both in Namur and internationally, by bringing digital arts into harmony with environmental responsibility and, more broadly, the three main axes of our artistic programme.

In physics, friction slows down movement, but also makes it possible. Friction generates energy, transformation, encounters. Which is precisely where *F(r)ictions* comes from: a fertile interplay between fiction and friction, an invitation to tell stories differently and to resist a world undergoing rapid technological change, dominated by the logic of optimisation, automation and fluidity. It is the polar opposite of the ideal of a frictionless society, which may be smooth-running, but is lifeless. The Amazon, Uber, Airbnb and Deliveroo galaxy is a prime example of this: as little communication, interaction and movement as possible.

By contrast, contemporary artistic practices, particularly those that embrace new media and digital technologies, bring back the notion of friction, porosity and relationships, starting with an active confrontation with the considerable environmental impact of digital technology itself. By rallying behind the political and poetic role of digital art and its capacity to reinvent living interfaces, Namur 2030 will create new forms of relationship and confluence, where futures can be explored in new ways. Confluence is a digital art, as we said in Q05.

With *F(r)ictions*, between 2026 and 2029, our programming will be evolving towards incorporating immersive, interactive and sensory devices into Namur 2030's flagship projects. These devices will be selected according to two complementary criteria. First, an international selection of existing works will be carried out by a committee of art curators specialising in digital arts. This is done in collaboration with the internationally renowned HACNUM network, which is heavily involved in issues of digital sustainability and which brings together more than 400 stakeholders from the hybrid arts and digital cultures.

The second means is the production, each year, of two original works created by way of international artistic residencies and designed to tour between a number of different structures. Each edition of *F(r)ictions* is structured around a critical sub-theme linked to the main themes of our programme (the night for *Noctis*, childhood for *Playground*, food for *Sow Food*, etc.). The residencies pay particular attention to sustainable practices, questioning consumption, reducing impact and exploring low-tech solutions. Each year, two artists and/or collectives will be welcomed into residence: one international artist and one artist from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Each artist (or collective) receives a grant of €25 000 to develop a new medium or art and science project, as well as support in

curating their contribution. The call for applications will be published each year, in particular via the UNESCO Creative Cities Network of Media Arts. In 2030, the works produced will be included in the official programme and these will then tour the network, as examples of a forward-looking artistic and technological commitment.

The official launch of *F(r)ictions* will take place at the end of October 2025, during the KIKK Festival, a leading international event dedicated to Media Arts. This edition of the event will bring together the entire network of UNESCO Creative Cities in the field of media arts, their institutional partners, the European Capitals of Culture, as well as artists likely to join the project. It will be on this occasion that the Responsible Digital Laboratory, presented in Chapter 3, will also be officially unveiled.



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ARTISTS & PARTNERS

KIKK Festival and its network of partners, UNESCO Creative Cities Network in Digital Arts, HACNUM (FR), Saloon (FR), Elektra (CA), Ars Electronica (AT), AFRIKIKK (BE), Chroniques (FR).

AXIS 1. TEMPORAL

FOLKLORE 2.0 FROM FEBRUARY TO JULY

Belgium is a country rich in folklore, carnivals and other traditions. Namur is a perfect example of this. Its stilt-walkers compete in spectacular jousting battles that date back to 1411. These are the oldest of their kind in the world and were added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2021. Other events include Folklore and Traditions Day in spring, organised by the Folknam association, which brings together 21 folklore, historical and traditional groups from the city; the «Fêtes de Wallonie» in September; gatherings of the '40 Molons' and 'Alfers' (flag-throwers) brotherhoods; the Jambes parade; the water jousting at La Plante; the Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse marches (also recognised as intangible heritage by UNESCO); the Grands Feux and other carnivals such as the Carnival of the Bears in Andenne and the Chinels in Fosses-la-Ville. In addition, student folklore has a strong presence and there are many fraternities in the area.

In Namur, as everywhere else in Belgium and in other countries, folklore is a source of enchantment, pride, common roots and shared identity. But it also raises questions and tensions about who exactly it represents and how. This great wealth of our heritage is now being challenged by societal change and the legitimate aspirations of new generations expressing desires and needs linked to key issues: greater inclusivity, openness, sustainability, equality and diversity. A healthy, but sometimes intense, tension arises between the

need for change and the desire to preserve traditions. This is fertile ground for creating new connections, encouraging reflection on the folklore of our territory and inspiring similar movements across Europe. It is in this spirit that we are developing several projects that constitute a first major focus of the programme, with transversal scientific support from UNamur, in particular its Department of Archaeology and Art Sciences, focusing on digital humanities.

This flagship project, which kicks off our year of Confluence, is divided into four axis: an exhibition that explores the dialogue between tradition and modernity (*Intertwined*); an invitation to major artists to immerse themselves in our folklore (*Immersion*); a large immersive exhibition displaying aspects of Belgian folklore (*Our folklore, our roots*); and a major, unifying celebration for new rituals (*We won't run(a) way!*).



INTERTWINED - FOLKLORE 2.0

At the Pavillon, a reference point for digital culture in Wallonia, KIKK will explore the dialogue between tradition and modernity in a major exhibition. How can we connect in a world that asks us to choose between protecting ourselves from constant change or embracing it, even if it means disregarding the past? What links exist or need to be invented between folklore and technology? From rituals of the past to modern-day digital practices, *Intertwined* questions the ways we connect or intertwine. From touch to the spoken word and from folklore traditions to new forms of collaboration, *Intertwined* reveals the universal languages of old rituals and those yet to come. What types of hybridizations do we want to have? What new forms of belonging are emerging? Through

interactive and immersive installations, visitors become part of a web of instinctive gestures connecting them to others. The masterful *Tape Installation de Numen / For Use* (AT/HR) takes over the Pavillon as a new backdrop for our stories. Visitors are encouraged to explore from the inside, without shoes or stilts. Véronique Béland, Anouk Kruithof and Jake Elwes are invited to consider traditions as fields for artistic experimentation or to bring folklore to new technologies. This gives rise to hybrid spaces and gestures of a dual nature.

At a time of cutbacks, *Intertwined* offers an open, fluid collective imagination that is constantly being reshaped. The exhibition combines art, science, memory and innovation to sketch out a world where the past speaks with the future, where the roots of our societies are intertwined with digital flows, and where humans invent new ways of looking at each other.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Marie du Chastel, KIKK, Le Pavillon, Numen/For Use (AT/HR), Anouk Kruithof (NL), Jake Elwes (GB), Véronique Béland (CA/FR).

IMMERSION - FOLKLORE 2.0

In parallel with *Intertwined*, we will be inviting four major international digital festivals to select a leading artist who will immerse themselves in Namur for an extended period and take part in one of the major folklore events that are programmed throughout the year. This artist will discover the stilt-walkers and the Molons, gain access to all their rituals and observe their

moments of celebration. The rich subject matter that emerges confronts two artistic imaginations and gives rise to works scattered throughout Namur's heritage sites, complementing the *Intertwined* exhibition. The residencies will take place in 2028 and 2029 so that in 2030 these creations can interact with local residents, tourists and local traditions in a spirit of transmission, renewal and international outreach.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Elektra (CA), Lumo Art & Tech Festival (FI), Ars Electronica (AT), S+T+ARTS PRIZE AFRICA.

OUR FOLKLORE, OUR ROOTS - FOLKLORE 2.0

This exhibition, organised in partnership with RTBF, the public radio and television broadcaster in French-speaking Belgium, and Sonuma, its archive fund, is being held at an exceptional venue: the Stade des Jeux, which is currently being refurbished (Q/44). The exhibition brings together a series of documentaries about folklore in Belgium, filmed in 2026 and 2027, interacting with the dazzling wealth of television archives dating back to the early days of television. A journey through time, exploring how we embody our traditions in the present and the past, the material forms a major exhibition delving into Belgian folklore, designed as a journey that combines 360° projections, multi-sensory walks and interactive immersions.

The exhibition immerses visitors in the atmosphere of the Soumonces and Carnivals of Andenne, Fosses-la-Ville, Binche, Stavelot, Malmedy, the Saint-Hubert festivities, the 15th August celebrations in Liège, the Doudou or the Feux de la Saint-Jean in Mons,

the Wallonia festivities, the marches of the Entre Sambre et Meuse, the Giants, the Ducasse de Sombrefe, the Ommegang in Mechelen and Brussels, the Laetare in Tournai, etc. There is also new folklore on display, such as the Carnaval Sauvage, the Zinneke Parade in Brussels, the Consoeurie des Connasses in La Louvière, the Carnaval des Ours d'Andenne and the Brûlage des Idées noires in Charleroi. In addition, we take a look at our European neighbours, whose traditions are also evolving.

Namur is listed as a major centre for living folklore, with a remarkable diversity of performers and traditions. It is home to the unmissable Namur Stilt-Walkers, whose jousting is listed as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the Molons of the Royal Moncrabeau Society (the oldest philanthropic folklore society in Wallonia), the Alfes and their spectacular flag-waving display, the Bragards with their humour and carnival floats, the Confrérie de la Malemort and its medieval re-enactments, the Namur Giants, the Cheval Bayard and the Chevaux Godins (this is a non-exhaustive list!).

Beyond the enjoyment of experiencing these moments of celebration and togetherness, the exhibition traces the origins of the main events, evoking the associated

tales and legends, the role of music, and exploring the changing role of women.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

RTBF, Sonuma, Wallonia-Brussels Federation, Namur Photographic Archives, Faculty of Ethnology – UNamur, Doudou Museum in Mons, Mask Museum in Binche, Museum of Walloon Life in Liège, Seeds of Knowledge – Kiruna 2029 (SE), Tamburica – Novi Sad (RS), Tartu 2024 (EE), UNESCO Media Arts Cities.

WE WON'T RUN(A)WAY! - FOLKLORE 2.0

Folklore is a celebration in its own right and is destined to remain so. It is a space for transmission, invention and shared joy. In 2030, we will be giving the festival a whole new dimension and turning it into a major Confluence of European folklore in collaboration with Europolia, contemporary citizen movements and the most unexpected festive forms of our time. It will all take place on 21st July, Belgium's National Day, which will be particularly special in 2030 as it also coincides with Belgium's bicentenary (see below).

This gathering celebrates the richness of popular expressions from yesterday and today by inviting traditional brotherhoods, sisterhoods, folk associations, student clubs, youth movements, activist groups, marching bands, circus companies, neighbourhood societies and communities of foreign origin, each with their own traditions, to parade side by side. And for the occasion, we'll rename them ***Fantasy Societies***. A wide range of practices and stories, brought together to build a shared adventure around a renewed collective imagination. Conceived as a symbolic and joyful alliance, this initiative seeks neither to erase the past nor to overturn traditions, but to bring them into dialogue with current dynamics and the contemporary

issues of diversity. It will be folklore, more than ever, as fertile ground for creation and living together.

Two artists are working together to orchestrate this living fresco: Greg Duret, composer and founder of the Don Fiasko brass band, also known as DJ Petit Piment, and Sara Selma Dolorès, director, clown and revue leader. Both are deeply rooted in European folk traditions and are open to the most original contemporary forms. The two artists first set out to explore the most inventive and original European practices, returning to develop a participatory, queer and festive scenario over a two-year period. Once everyone has been invited to Namur, the collective working process begins with listening: each group is invited to recount its origins, rituals and stories as part of a 'joyful collective psychoanalysis' that feeds into the creation of the great gathering of 2030.

The highlight of the event will be a spectacular parade on a huge catwalk set up on the Esplanade de la Citadelle. Inspired by the codes of revue and fashion shows, revisited with the derision, poetry and surrealism characteristic of our two artists. And when seen in all its splendour, it is indeed a world of colourful traditions that parades before us: all of these Fantasy Societies that seek to participate in a great breath of freedom and a celebration of the most colourful imaginations that light up the night are honoured.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Greg Duret, Don Fiasko, DJ Petit Piment, Sara Selma Dolorès, folklore, historical and traditional groups from Namur and the territory, including Folknam, Les Échasseurs namurois, Les 40 Molons, Marcheurs de l'Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse, Chinels (Fosses-la-Ville), student confraternities from the territory, Joutes nautiques, etc.

FOLKLORE FORUM - FOLKLORE 2.0

To ensure that all these projects (and the logical debates they will raise) are supported in the most democratic and participatory way possible, Namur 2030 will create a *Folklore Forum* in 2026.

Designed as a citizens' committee on folklore and with the support of the local authority councils in our territory, the Forum will act as an advisory committee on the strategic issue of the evolution of folkloric practices and enables citizens to collectively shape the future of their popular

festivals. The *Folklore Forum* takes its inspiration from an initiative conducted in Ath (located in another Walloon province, Hainaut) which created a similar committee on the tensions associated with its Ducasse tradition.

The purpose of the committee, beyond providing a space for debate and exchange, is to draft a charter dealing with the challenges facing local folklore (gender equality, diversity, inclusivity) for the coming decades and to submit it by 2030 to the various authorities, in collaboration with the UNESCO representatives concerned with these issues.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Municipal councils of the municipalities of the territory, residents, folklore, historical and traditional groups from Namur and the territory, including Folknam, Les Échasseurs namurois, Les 40 Molons, Marcheurs de l'Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse, Chinels (Fosses-la-Ville), etc.

MYSTERY MEETINGS ONE WEEKEND IN MARCH

Mystery Meetings offers Namur residents a unique, immersive artistic experience across the city over a 24-hour period. Around 100 performances are scheduled to be held in unusual venues not normally dedicated to culture and which will be kept secret until the last minute. All the audience is able to choose is the time they want to come, without knowing either the venue or the artistic programme. On D-Day, at the agreed time, a guide welcomes participants and leads them on foot to the meeting point, where they will enjoy short and surprising experiences at dusk, in the early morning or in the middle of the night, at confidential locations, such as the bunker, the historic Grafé Lecocq cellars, the mayor's office, the belfry, the Bishop's Gardens, a church sacristy, a drunk tank, the SNCB depots, a wasteland, a bakery, or even the secret workshops of a perfumier located in the bowels of the Citadel.

The great thing is, you never know what you're going to see, except that you'll be warmly welcomed by the artists, who have around 20 minutes to present a creation that interacts closely with the space they've been allocated. The entire tour is carried out on foot, in small groups, to encourage closeness, listening and surprise. Each participant constructs their own pathway through the city, following their individual intuition, appetite and imagination, to bring together heritage and contemporary performance art. In addition to showcasing Namur's historical, architectural and cultural heritage, this small-scale artistic project seeks to invent a new, more intimate and inquisitive relationship with the city. It also creates unique encounters between performers, places and audiences. And it reawakens mystery, triggers wonder and gives new meaning to the way we inhabit urban space.

The project is being developed using a rigorous methodology based on dialogue and co-construction. It begins with the selection of the performance venues. This is done mainly

through a call for citizen projects entitled '*Do you know any original and secret place worth sharing?*', which allows spaces very few people know about to be suggested by local residents or users yet to be identified. Cultural actors such as La clic, KIKK in town, Musique à tous les étages and Beautés soniques also share their knowledge of unusual places. The artists then meet people connected with these places to develop a truly authentic proposal over time. On the day itself, the guides also play a central role: they direct visitors, regulate flows, welcome people at the entrance and ensure that everyone enjoys the collective experience. These guides are 'Confluencers' who have been trained in theatre and are capable of providing this sensitive and lively support role.

Special attention is also being paid to the local art scene, which is invited to many of the venues and supported through the *Rocket* residency programme (Q/09 & 10) and the Théâtre Jardin Passion, a creative space in Namur dedicated to local theatre.

Mystery Meetings is also intended to act as a springboard for recent graduates from higher education art schools in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (FWB). With four drama schools, a master's degree in dance and four visual arts institutes, the FWB benefits from a remarkable academic arts network. Through accompanied commissions, *Mystery Meetings* offers these young talents a meaningful first or second professional experience as part of an innovative and collective approach. Namur 2030 will curate the initiative, in close collaboration with the City of Namur, which has been developing the 'Chambres avec vues' ('Rooms with a View') project for a number of years, which focuses specifically on the principle of temporary exhibitions staged in residents' homes and in doing so has developed real expertise in the sensitive process of bringing artists and residents together.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Musique à tous les étages, Rocket, Théâtre Jardin Passion, higher artistic education institutions of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, City of Namur, project "Chambres avec vues".

SOW FOOD FROM APRIL TO SEPTEMBER

Sow Food is an invitation to explore cooking as a universal language and an art form in its own right. Through a series of *Food* projects, Namur 2030 is creating a space for dialogue between people and their environment, particularly in terms of what they find there to eat. It is a space to talk about food cravings, Proustian madeleines and good health through food. It is also a space at the crossover point of art, design and several social issues, with the project addressing cooking in all its complexity.

Sow Food is designed to operate as an artistic laboratory, with time set aside in advance to sow the seeds of change and cultivate best practices. The project is part of a circular approach inspired by natural agri-food cycles and the European Commission's Farm to Fork strategy. It engages artists, designers, researchers, farmers, chefs and ordinary

people in an active reflection into how we think about, grow, transform and share food. It also connects the region's agro-culinary heritage with forward-looking visions driven by artistic, committed or speculative practices.

Sow Food brings together the local and the global, knowledge going back generations and tomorrow's research, as well as the pleasurable act of eating and that of creating a shared experience. It is part of the food resilience strategy of the City of Namur and its Air, Climate and Energy Plan (PACE), involving the Namur Sustainable Agri-Food Council in its governance and implementation. In staging *Sow Food*, Namur 2030 is demonstrating its desire to accelerate resilience in the territory facing already perceptible and future shocks of climate change.

TAKE 1 / SOW

An event following the natural cycle: spaces, time and inter-connexions — This initial phase begins with participatory mapping of agroecological systems in the Namur region, carried out with rural and urban communities and guided by a specialist in predictive design in the form of the Belgian agency Pantopicon. Organisations such as the Namur Food Belt, Paysans-Artisans, local agricultural colleges and research partners are

all working together to devise scalable and resilient projects focused on local distribution and food sovereignty. And digital tools, including the *Seed Library*, which won the Ars Electronica Award in 2024, are serving as sources of inspiration for this mapping exercise. In a second phase, a functional and sustainable art installation is taking shape near the Nef performance venue. Designed as a collective, evolving and participatory manifesto, it brings

together shared vegetable gardens, a neighbourhood oven, a space for caring for living things and socialising, co-created with residents, students and local associations. This grassroots work, focused on inclusion and biodiversity, is supported by international artists such as Cooking Chapters, a twosome renowned for their projects linking ecology, food and citizen activation.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Pantopicon (BE), Tchak magazine, Les Jardins d'Oo by Xavier Anciaux, APAQ-W, Ceinture Alimentaire Namuroise, Paysans-Artisans, Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, Coquelicots ASBL, Provincial Hotel School, The Library of Seeds - Green Library - France Bevk Public Library (SI), Daniel Fernández Pascual and Alon Schwabe (GB).

TAKE 2 / HARVEST

In 2030, a major critical design exhibition called 'Voracity vs Frugality' will explore the links between cooking and design, and between contemporary creation and sustainable food transformation. How do we combat the industrial voracity of a productivist mindset and the endless appetite of agri-food capitalism? How can we imagine more modest, circular, user-friendly and collaborative practices that promote the transition towards contented frugality?

Alongside this exhibition, a series of workshops led by chefs, artists and designers will share their expertise and offer visitors the chance to try out new techniques for processing, cooking, preserving and regenerating food. Curated by Italian born artist Giovanna Massoni who promotes Belgian and international design through a range of projects and collaborations. She directed *Triennale Reciprocity* in Liège (2012-2018) and organised *'The Taste of Change'* at

the Universal Expo in Milan in 2015. Her work blends design, sustainability, circular economy and civic participation. This exhibition features a selection of international artists and designers with innovative approaches, such as Chloé Rutzerveld (NL), Atelier Luma (FR), Kosuke Araki (JP), Jinhyun Jeon (JP) and Eugenia Morpurgo (IT). The call for participation will be launched in 2028, while the exhibition will be held in 2030 at the Nef performance venue.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Giovanna Massoni (IT/BE), Food Futurist Chloé Rutzerveld (NL), Atelier Luma (FR), Kosuke Araki (JP), Jinhyun Jeon (KR), Eugenia Morpurgo (IT), la Nef (BE).

TAKE 3 / CELEBRATE

Celebrate the ritual of the meal, sharing food, today and tomorrow, here and elsewhere. Utopia and dystopia. But first and foremost, pleasure, sharing, hospitality and conviviality. Food as an inclusive experience and storytelling in the form of nine collective banquets presented in the *Confluence Hubs*. Each banquet will be designed by a multidisciplinary team combining a local chef, a producer or partner supplier (such as the Ceinture Alimentaire Namuroise or Paysans-Artisans), an international artist and a mediation or research organisation.

These meals will showcase recipes of the future, inspired by local resources, presented in a unique setting and designed as moments of collective celebration. Through gleaming, foraging, preparation and tasting, the banquets become sensory and memorable experiences, nourished by a cultural diversity that is embraced and joyfully celebrated. The model created by Jasper Udink ten Cate of the Creative Chef Studio in the Netherlands, which combines art, music, food and sensory storytelling, provides a powerful inspiration for this phase. Similarly, the

approach of the Arabeschi di Latte studio (IT/UK) questions the cultural value of conviviality and shared memories and traditions. And also Giulia Soldati (IT/DK) who creates edible experiences that engage all the senses, in particular the sense of touch. The work of collectives such as Ilotopie, Rara Woulib and Théâtre à l'envers in France is also of huge value for their experience in creatively staging such adventures. Finally, for this particularly joyful phase, special attention is paid to the participation of schools associated with the *Confluence Hubs*.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Cuisine Sauvage ASBL, Ateliers de l'Ecole Hôtelière de la Province de Namur, Ceinture Alimentaire Namuroise, Paysans-Artisans, Confluence Hubs, Benoît Cloes (Génération W), Atelier de Bossimé, Refoodges – Brussels, Jeroen Meus – Leuven, Giovanna Massoni (IT/FR), Creative Chef Studio (NL), Studio Arabeschi di Latte (IT/GB), Giulia Soldati (IT/DK), RaraWoulib (FR), Laboratory for the Future of Food – Zavod Kersnikova (SI/), Take a Bite at Nature – Kiruna (SE), Slow Food Festival, Lublin (PL), Degustories – Trenčín (SK), Forgotten Food Festival (Festival da Comida Esquecida) – Faro (PT), 1000 + 1 Drinks – Larnaka (CY), Évora (PT), Le Théâtre à l'Envers (FR), Ilotopie (FR), Āgenskalna Tīrgus, Riga (LV), Slow Food International network.

TAKE 4/ DISSEMINATE

Take 4 sets up eating as a place of negotiation, debate and the construction of a shared story. Throughout history, meals, as codified and ritualised social occasions, have played an important role in creating and maintaining new communities and societies. In the heart of the Nef, a series of table talks will be organised during the exhibition, in the form of meals accompanied by a performance.

Sitting around a connected table, extended by screens and designed as an open stage, artists, experts, citizens and chefs discuss major contemporary issues: frugality as a political gesture, systemic voracity, food sovereignty, the place of culinary traditions and Namur's gastronomic brotherhoods (grouped together in a council) in a globalised world. Each table is designed by a pair of an artist and a chef, in collaboration with a guest institution from another European country. These events will be attended by leading figures from the worlds of gastronomy, philosophy, scientific research and food design, such as Sang Hoon Degeimbre (BE), representatives from Slow Food and the Smart Gastronomy

Lab, and artists such as Bompas & Parr.

To sum up, in 2030, *Sow Food* will offer a cross-disciplinary and rigorous approach to food as a lever for ecological, cultural and social transition. It will bring together local communities, creativity and civic engagement to shape a nourishing and sensitive future with local roots and global connections.

REFOODGEES is a non-profit organisation, based in Brussels, that works to promote the social and professional integration of refugees and new arrivals through catering. This makes *Refoodgees* a melting pot of cultures through cooking. It proves that mutual support can be experienced when eating and that gastronomy can be a tool for integration and living together. *Refoodgees*, with the support of Namur 2030, is developing a project to provide support and catering from 2028 onwards, as well as long-term support for dozens of new arrivals on our territory.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Sang Hoon Degeimbre, Smart Gastronomy Lab, gastronomic confraternities of Namur, Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, La Nef, Giovanna Massoni (IT/FR), Imminent Future of Food & Drink by Bompas & Parr (GB), Évora (PT), Danaterre (FR), Donastia - San Sebastián 2016 (ES), Laboratory for the Future of Food – Zavod Kersnikova (S), Take a Bite at Nature – Kiruna (SE), Ars Electronica – Linz (AT), Slow Food Festival – Lublin (PL), Āgenskalna Tīrgus – Riga (LV), Coal (FR), Degustories – Trenčín (SK), Faro (PT), 1000 + 1 Drinks – Larnaka (CY), Slow Food International network and the Climavore network.

TRUE STORIES MAY

In a world where fake news, algorithmic bubbles, threats to journalists and media ownership concentration are all fuelling anti-democratic upheavals, the *True Stories* festival, created in Namur in 2021 by higher education stakeholders, in collaboration with Delta, celebrates journalistic creation in all its forms. A blend of press illustration, cinema, photography, documentary video and non-fiction literature, *True Stories* is a space where journalists, cartoonists, comedians, local people, digital content creators and intellectuals can all meet, debate and question each other, far from preconceived ideas.

Faced with content becoming standardised, a fact that is being driven by artificial intelligence, *True Stories* put the human side back at the centre of information production by giving pride of place to living stories. By making the audience of all ages aware of engaged, high-quality information, *True Stories* also gives them the keys to making their way in the battle that gaining our attention has become. To achieve that, both in 2030 and in the

editions leading up to then, *True Stories* is growing rapidly and is set to continue this growth by focusing on more 'headliners' and will do so, above all, thanks to several enhanced and even completely new areas of focus. So, beyond the screenings and discussions that are at the heart of the festival, visual arts are also featured through a series of **temporary exhibitions**, documentaries and artistic events. One of these will be dedicated to the first global retrospective of the work of Bieke Depoorter, the only female Belgian photographer at the Magnum agency.

Heading to 2030, the festival will first double, then triple the number of **media education** workshops aimed at **schools**. Identifying false information, learning how to use AI properly, checking sources and putting yourself in the shoes of a community manager are just some of the activities already offered by the festival. Added to this will be **science-based fact-checking workshops** designed to test the soundness of our knowledge with specialists in scepticism (the rational study of phenomena presented as

paranormal), such as French scientist Richard Monvoisin.

The festival has taken on an important international dimension and is opening up widely to Europe through to a productive network of partners. The focus for 2030 will be **Ukraine**, with the participation of Ukrainian journalists (Oksana Leuta, Tatiana Frolova, Anastassia Volkova and others), Russian journalists (Vladimir Kara-Mourza), as well as figures from the Russian political opposition (such as Yulia Navalnaya and Ilya Yashin) and international journalists (notably members of the investigative media consortium Forbidden Stories).

Major European journalism festivals are also invited, such as the Journalism Festival in Perugia (IT), and

festivals in Eastern Europe (Voices in Zagreb, The Power of Storytelling in Bucharest), thus initiating a dialogue that has been virtually non-existent between journalists from Western and Eastern Europe.

Between now and 2030, Namur will be home to the Pole Media, a centre of excellence for the creative and digital industries, supporting training, innovation and collaboration at local and international level. Supported by Boukè, HEAJ, DreamWall and RTBF, it will offer 4,800 m² of state-of-the-art facilities, including studios, media labs and training spaces. Fully integrated into Namur 2030, the Namur media Department will contribute towards co-creation, research, digital skills training and media education.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Action Média Jeunes and Média Animation, UNamur, Association des Journalistes Professionnels (AJP), Le Delta, HEAJ, Kiosque, the collective of free and independent media (Médor, Wilfried, Imagine, Le Ligneur, Tchak, Alter Échos, Axelle magazine, FEJ – European Federation of Journalists, Prenons la Une, Pôle Média Namur, Boukè, RTBF, Docville – Documentary Film Festival Leuven (BE), The Narrative Laundry Lab – The City of Weaves (PL), Clickbait Citizen – Chris Baldwin (BG), PiNA – Kulturno Izobraževalno Društvo (SI), Lemesos International Documentary Festival (CY), SHORTZ Film Festival, Novi Sad (RS), Visa pour l'image – Perpignan (FR), Festival international de journalisme de Couthures (FR), Live Magazine (FR), International Federation of Journalists – based in Brussels (EU), Reporters Without Borders (EU), Cartooning for Peace (EU), Forbidden Stories (EU), Kometa (FR), Art of Survival documentary short film collection "Wild South" – Tartu (EE), Millenium Festival (BE), International Journalism Festival (IT), Voices – Zagreb (HR), The Power of Storytelling – Bucharest (RO), L'viv Media Forum (UA).

BUILTOPIA MID-JULY – MID-AUGUST

At the point where design, architecture and electronic music all meet, *Builtopia* (previously Camping Europa) reshapes our perception of what we call 'shelter'. Once a rampart against invaders, in 2030 the Citadel in Namur is being transformed into a rampart against obscurantism and the rise of fascism throughout Europe by creating an open space for celebration, creativity and exchange for European youth. For one month, workers (in masonry, ironwork, carpentry, metalwork, glasswork, etc.), makers, architects, visual artists, designers, builders, etc. from across the continent, under the guidance of experts in temporary structures and sustainable materials, will take over the site to design spectacular installations.

Artistic direction comes under the responsibility of the German collective Raumlabor, which has a reputation for its innovative and participatory urban work conducted on an international scale. Operational coordination, reception protocols and on-site methodology are provided by the French collective Yes We Camp, which specialises in the temporary use of urban spaces and has staged various iconic projects in France. The project places particular emphasis on the principle of reuse, integrating this into its DNA with the expertise of different collectives (ROTOR, Degré47, ConstructLab, Ressourcerie Namuroise, etc.). Monumental sculptures, utopian architecture and immersive artworks stand as symbols of resistance in the face of threats of retreat. To bring them to life, we are launching a major call for projects to recruit 150 architects from across Europe to spend a month of co-creation, working at the top of the Citadel. The EAAE, the European network of architecture schools that includes more than 130 establish-

ments, will handle the extensive work of issuing the call for projects. This creative buzz will culminate in the arrival of delegations from the Compagnons Bâisseurs and the Compagnons de France, as well as their equivalents in other European countries, plus the major international competition Euroskills.

Following on from these constructions, which are veritable manifestos for a united Europe, electronic music takes centre stage for a two-day festival, as a parallel form of symbolic resistance. Since the 1980s, electronic music has embodied a counterculture promoting values of inclusivity, anti-racism and anti-fascism. DJs playing techno, house, disco, drum & bass and breakbeat from the best avant-garde scenes in Europe will be taking over this reinvented space. The energy of Burning Man, the uniqueness of the Flemish festival Horst (Vilvoorde) and the free spirit of Woodstock all come together to offer an immersive experience that will attract 20,000 young Europeans.

Special features: music direction based on blending of genres in electronic music, with the focus on queer cultures and interculturality provided by the Liquid agency (Initial Festival and Peacock Society in France, Dour Festival in Belgique).

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

ICA-WB – Institut Culturel d'Architecture Wallonie-Bruxelles based in Namur, ROTOR, Ressourcerie Namuroise, ESA Saint-Luc Brussels, Liquiid (BE/FR), Agence wallonne du Patrimoine (AWaP), Compagnons bâtisseurs, Raumlabor (DE), Yes We Camp (FR), Arctic Fire – Kiruna (SE), Larnaka BioDesign Festival – Larnaka (CY), Cyprus University of Technology – Lemesos (CY), Urban Culture Festival – Nikšić (ME), FH Joanneum – Graz (AT), Politecnico di Milano (IT), ConstructLab (Transnational Network), Compagnons de France (FR), EUNIC Brussels cluster, European Solidarity Corps, EAAE – European Association for Architectural Education (network of more than 130 institutions across Europe and beyond), Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP).

RELEASED EXPRESSIONS SEPTEMBER

A few years ago, the historian Florence Pierre conducted a study of the walls of the Citadel of Namur, examining every wall and every stone. In all, she recorded a total of 2,426 marks and graffiti. Words, drawings, names, love messages and war marks, engraved between the 18th century and 2020, reflecting personal and collective stories. A unique subject, with a textual and graphic memory that *Released Expressions* aims to showcase in 2030 by bringing these echoes of the past into dialogue with contemporary urban art practices, such as graffiti and photographic collage.

These two forms of expression are showcased in Namur, on the one hand by the Drash (BE) collective, which organises the *Pschitt* festival dedicated to graffiti, and on the other by the *Aspëkt* (BE) collective, which focuses on visual arts and photography, one of whose main areas of interest is photographic collage in public spaces. These are two distinct ways of representing free and urban expression. In terms of curation, each of the two collectives invites an external European partner: *Drash* teams up with the *Kosovars of Qart*, a cultural operator in Pristina (XK) specialising in monumental mural projects and arts education. *Qart* is renowned for its ability to activate public spaces through artistic projects bringing together hundreds of European graffiti artists. Meanwhile, *Aspëkt* is working in tandem with Oripeau (FR) who explores the artistic uses of urban space through collage, combining visual art, photography and contextual intervention. Oripeau is distinctive for its poetic and political approach, which transforms walls into a medium for collective histories and intimate stories.

By pooling their resources, these four providers from different geographical and aesthetic backgrounds are inviting around a hundred European graffiti artists, photographers and collage artists to take part in the event. Free, urban and contemporary expression will take over the city walls and the banks of the Meuse and Sambre rivers along a route stretching several kilometres, echoing historical traces. Contemporary artists draw inspiration from ancient inscriptions rediscovered in the city's underground passages, a veritable creative breeding ground for expressing the same fundamental need today: **asserting their presence or visit to the city through art.**

Released Expressions is enhanced with a digital dimension, in **interactive visual arts, mixed reality, game design and media art**, to superimpose new layers onto the existing ones, creating a dialogue with the art works. These actions can

take various forms: contextual sound additions, animations projected in situ, or participatory devices allowing visitors to leave their own traces, physical and/or digital. This crossover between graffiti, urban memory and digital arts opens up fertile ground for exploring the concepts of **palimpsest, augmented memory and even augmented collective narration**, while at the same time providing a sensitive, accessible and evolving experience of public space. For this digital extension, we are working with the University of Namur and the Haute Ecole Albert Jacquard, which, through its transmedia department, has taken on this project and is inviting the best European schools and their students to a huge 48-hour creative hackathon.

This project is accompanied by research, co-curation and in-depth reflection led by Claire Calogirou, PhD in ethnology and researcher at CNRS/Idemec (Institute for Mediterranean and Comparative Studies) and Mucem (Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations). Her work focuses on the production of the city through urban cultures, in particular graffiti, skateboarding and hip-hop.. She explores the relationships between popular and high culture, the transmission of knowledge, identity and aesthetic issues, and forms of tangible and intangible heritage. She has also conducted research for the Mucem's collections on skateboarding (1992–2001), hip-hop and graffiti (since 1999). We should also mention the work of Denis Saint-Amand, a qualified researcher at the FNRS at UNamur, who specialises in contemporary French literature and 'littératures sauvages' ('wild literature').

Poetry and slam also feature in the exhibition as an extension of urban expression through words, poetry and sound. The Maison de la Poésie in Namur provides programming and mediation with their partners in Nantes, Appelle-moi poésie and Les Maliennes by Maralinké, slam poets with a humanist bent who campaign for a fairer world.

Released Expressions invite reflection on our universal and timeless need to mark our presence, to create narratives and representations, and to fight against oblivion. At a time when certain ideas, regions and identities are threatened with eradication in Europe, this project reaffirms the power of traces, however modest, as an act of freedom.

It should be noted that the most striking works will remain on display beyond 2030, enriching Namur's urban art collection, which already includes more than thirty works of art in public spaces.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Florence Pierre, Drash collective, Pschitt festival, Aspëkt collective, University of Namur, Haute École Albert Jacquard, Denis Saint-Amand (UNamur), Maison de la Poésie de Namur, Citadel of Namur, Qart-Pristina (XK), Oripeau – Nantes (FR), Claire Calogirou – Mucem (FR), Appelle-moi poésie – Nantes (FR), Maralinké (ML).

BESTIARY OCTOBER TO DECEMBER

In literature, 'Bestiary' refer to manuscripts that, since the Middle Ages, have collected fables and moral tales about 'beasts,' both real and imaginary animals. Whether inspired by ancient legends, folk tales, or creatures invented by contemporary cinema, bestiaries have always served to exorcise fears. But the story told by the Namur 2030 bestiary does not celebrate progress or the domination of human intelligence over the animal world. It does not seek to ward off a fantastical animal threat, but rather to make us reflect on the consequences of our detachment from the living world: the collapse of biodiversity, the sixth mass extinction, the disappearance of birdsong, the urgent need for regenerative approaches, and so on.

Deliberately cross-disciplinary, *Bestiary* builds bridges between disciplines, aesthetics, audiences and cultural institutions in order to circulate perspectives, knowledge and sensibilities. It explores our relationship with the world – not to explain it, but to better inhabit it and, ultimately, perhaps to achieve greater harmony between living organisms.

Built around a large visual and sensory exhibition in the heart of the wooded paths of the Citadelle, this project also includes other activities such as a museum exhibition showcasing local bestiaries, a children's literature festival on the theme of bestiaries, and a nod to the wildlife of our territory through a photographic competition.



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VISUAL AND SENSORY EXHIBITION - BESTIARY

Rather than a catalogue of real or imaginary species, our bestiary takes the form of an immersive and tragic visual and audio experience that explores what no longer exists or what is slowly disappearing. It unfolds at the heart of the Citadel of Namur site like a walking tour, a scene from the world that is both sublime and disturbing, where emotions intersect, collide and respond to one another. What the visitor needs to **do is listen to the often silent cry of the animal world and hear, somewhere in the darkness, its call for help.**

Accompanied by Thibault de Mayer, a philosopher of science from the University of Namur, this approach questions the possible forms of interactivity with living beings and invites us to shift our perspective and break away from an anthropocentric view of the world. This shift aims to welcome other points of view: those of animals, plants and non-humans, whose forms of intelligence, communication and perception can teach us to reimagine the ways in which we inhabit the world. As a night-time, multi-sensory exhibition, *Bestiary* has been developed in conjunction with Joanie Lemerrier, a visual artist and climate activist, and Juliette Bibasse, a curator

specialising in technological art installations related to public space and heritage. Joanie Lemerrier will also design several of the works displayed in the exhibitions.

In an era marked by what French philosopher and writer Baptiste Morizot calls a '**crisis of sensitivity**', there is an urgent need to renew our perspective and our relationship with living things. So what if the Citadel of Namur, an iconic site covered in vegetation, dotted with discreet paths, populated by ancient trees and steeped in forgotten stories, became a gateway to a different way of perception?

From prehistoric animal representations to the most abstract forms, this modern-day bestiary guides us towards an experience where animals become plants, totems, companions and hybrids. Some works are characterised by their simple analogue style, while others rely on complex technologies. But as the night progresses, it is the lights, sounds and sensations that weave together the unity of a single narrative, while respecting life at the site. Indeed, in implementing the project, particular attention is paid to limiting its impact on biodiversity (limiting trampling by people's feet, noise and light pollution, etc.). The expertise of naturalists is being drawn upon through a partnership with the Federation of Natural Parks of Wallonia and the Natura 2000 network.

A number of artists have already been approached, including the Disnovation collective, which has designed an Anthropocene bestiary as part of the European NEST programme, Camille Scherrer, with

a monumental and generative version of her project, *Into the Woods*, Suzanne Husky, Aki Inomata, Rimini Protokoll for a performative sound walk, and Ief Spincemaille, with the creation of animal vision devices.

HISTORY OF THE BESTIARY IN OUR REGIONS - BESTIARY

Echoing this sensory and poetic journey, a more heritage-focused exhibition explores the history of bestiaries, monsters and other metamorphoses from our regions, which feature heavily in art history. The exhibition draws on collections from

museums in the province and city, showcasing works that have been selected to form a narrative thread tracing the evolution of animal representations and their influence on our imaginations.

THE BESTIARY AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE - BESTIARY

Because the bestiary is closely linked to the world of childhood, Bestiary offers a programme of events and activities specifically designed for young audiences. **Children's books are filled to the brim with animals, both real and imaginary, that convey powerful emotions and tell stories of discovery.** This link will be explored through a series of activities focusing on children's literature, including readings, meetings with authors, exhibitions of children's works in

partnership with libraries and public reading services in Namur and the surrounding area, independent bookshops and cultural organisations involved in promoting access to reading and literacy. This event dedicated to children's literature is also intended as a first step towards establishing a permanent annual children's literature festival, coordinated artistically by the team behind the Intime Festival literature festival, a partner of Namur 2030, which has long sought to meet this need for young people on the territory.

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION NAMUR NATURE FESTIVAL - BESTIARY

In partnership with the Namur Nature Festival, a call for entries will be launched in 2026 for amateur and professional photographers from Belgium and across Europe to document wildlife in the urban environment of Namur. The photographs, revealing the beauty, ingenuity or vulnerability of often invisible species – foxes, owls, hedgehogs, rats, birds of prey, insects – will be exhibited in 2030 on panels installed throughout the city.

these often misunderstood species. These stories are created by amateur writers, coordinated by the Maison du Conte de Namur and experienced authors, and in collaboration with scientists (Wallonia Public Service, naturalist circles, etc.) to ensure the accuracy of the content while preserving the symbolic power of the narrative. By combining knowledge and fiction, this approach aims to arouse curiosity, foster empathy and restore the place of living things in our collective imagination.

Each image is accompanied by an original story, based on scientific data, designed to change our perception of

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Juliette Bibasse, Joanie Lemerrier, Thibault de Meyer (UNamur), Ief Spincemaille, Fédération des Parcs naturels de Wallonie, Disnovation collective (NEST programme), museums of the Province of Namur, museums of the City of Namur, Namur public reading service and that of the territory, independent bookstores, cultural structures for access to reading and literacy, Intime Festival, Festival Nature Namur, Maison du Conte de Namur, naturalist circles, Camille Scherrer (FR/CH), Suzanne Husky (FR/US), Aki Inomata (JP), Rimini Protokoll (DE), Ryoichi Kurokawa (JP).

AXIS 2. GEOGRAPHICAL

SAMBRE 2030 THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Through *Sambre 2030* this important river of the territory becomes a major symbolic and cultural player in Namur 2030. As a confluence point with many possibilities, *Sambre 2030* combines a sensitive exploration of the territory, collective fiction and works of art in situ, in a cross-disciplinary dynamic that blends ecology, social memory, artistic expression, the rights of living beings and citizen involvement.

The Sambre is a river 190 km long that links France and Belgium, flowing through areas that have seen more than their fair share of historical, industrial and social struggles. At the beginning of the 20th century, its intensive mining activity made it one of the richest regions in Europe. The river, which helped make this development possible, has since been neglected and become despised. The first river to be canalised in Belgium, the Sambre is now perceived as a silent entity, reduced to a utilitarian function and often ignored by those who live along its banks due to its polluted state.

Sambre 2030, initiated by artist Olivier Pestiaux, takes the position of granting the river legal personality, drawing inspiration from a number of pioneering initiatives around the world, such as that of the Loire Parliament in France. This recognition is intended to pave the way for a new

relationship between humans and their environment, based on reciprocity, shared memory and reparation.

Making a long-neglected river visible again, restoring meaning to underappreciated landscapes and leveraging change that can be replicated elsewhere locally and across Europe: this project is fully in line with Namur 2030's goals of bringing together the territory, its river, its inhabitants and their memories. *Sambre 2030* also uses culture as a tool for healing and getting people involved. The project spans across is in three phases.

Phase 1: listen to all the rushing waters (2027–2028) — The aim is to listen carefully in order to gather fictional data using a systemic approach. The different Sambres are identified as subjects, along with the different points of view and interests surrounding the river. This research phase aims to gather material from several initiatives carried out simultaneously in the area by different universities and artists: a photography project (Gilles Saussier), a documentary project (Xavier Istasse), a sound installation (Julien Poidevin) and a writing project (Olivier Pestiaux) are complemented by participatory mapping work led by Virginie Pigeon. Memories, archives, legends, local anecdotes: the aim is to build a shared heritage of the Sambre.



The entire project is supported by four universities (UNamur, LOCI-IMA, ULB, ULiège) and associations such as Contrat-Rivières, which will ease the way for any permits that need to be obtained and data collected. The project also benefits from an international network focused on the Rights of Nature, including the International Rivers and International Rivers and Streams Network led by Marine Yzquierdo and Camille de Toledo in France, and The Revitalisation of the Bystrzyca River in Lublin 2029 (PL), curated by Ludomir Franczak and Marcin Dymiter.

Phase 2: Write a script about a river (2028) — The aim is to arrive at a scenario that is realistic, poetic and political, in which the river is the main character. This fiction conveys the different voices that make up the river with the help of a pool of Belgian scriptwriters including Fabien Vehlmann,

Thomas Gunzig and Paloma Sermon-Dai (a multi-award-winning young filmmaker from Namur).

Phase 3: Create art (2028-2030) — Based on the script created, ten artists will each create a work of art on the banks of the Sambre, turning the ten chapters of this new story into fiction. Sculpture, sound installation, small-scale architecture, poetic signage, flags: each work will be designed in partnership with a local cultural institution, which will be responsible for its technical production, maintenance and mediation, ensuring that the works are embraced by the local community.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Olivier Pestiaux, Gilles Saussier, Xavier Istasse, Julien Poidevin, Virginie Pigeon, UNamur, ULB, ULiège, Contrat-Rivières, Fabien Vehlmann, Thomas Gunzig, Paloma Sermon-Dai, LOCI-IMA, International Rivers and Streams Network, Parlement de Loire (FR), Marine Yzquierdo (FR), Camille de Toledo (FR), Ludomir Franczak and Marcin Dymiter collective – Lublin (PL).

MUSIC SIDE APRIL

While standardised pop music continues to grow in popularity, Namur 2030 is offering two days dedicated to alternative European music across the city, with sixteen other countries taking part.

Supported by Creative Europe in 2017, the Live DMA network (Live Europe – Developing Music Associations) was established in 2012 to bring together national and regional associations working to promote and support the contemporary music industry. All of the members of Live DMA are involved in programming *Music Side* in order to create confluences between the different viewpoints on modern music. **Swedish metal, Belgian jazz-techno, Dutch hardcore, German house, Estonian rock, Spanish rap:** they're all there to create an explosive cocktail that takes the audience on a journey to the heart of alternative European cultures. This music develops in independent networks away from radio stations, algorithms and mainstream media. It is a vibrant scene whose research and energy often end up influencing global pop music.

The various offerings are spread throughout the city: concert halls, bars and unusual venues with capacities ranging from 50 to 800 people. **Two days of European gatherings and happenings focusing on alternative music that also serve as a reminder** of the essential role of music as a driver of social change, cohesion and artistic innovation. **Out of the sixty concerts**, ten will be scheduled by local cultural stakeholders (Belvédère, Delta, Namur Concert Hall, CCN, La Nef, Drash, Exergo, Trust, etc.) which will highlight the best of what Belgium

produces in alternative contemporary music, with a joint selection from Court-Circuit, Clubcircuit, WBM and Vi.BE (Belgium Booms).

The method used ensures geographical diversity, fair representation of European scenes and strong roots in the Belgian ecosystem. On the Thursday ahead of the concerts, a European Contemporary Music Forum will bring together industry professionals in a series of debates, workshops and encounters. The programme will also feature the Culture Crew initiative from the International Youth Music Festival working in several member countries. This project enables 12-18-year-olds to stage concerts in their schools (programming, hospitality, communication, logistics), and to foster their skills in cultural event management. Their participation in *Music Side* will strengthen their participation in cultural life and promote the emergence of a new generation of citizens who are sensitive to alternative music, the European Union, its diversity and cultural engineering.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Belvédère, Delta, Namur Concert Hall, CCN, La Nef, Drash, Exergo, Trust, Court-Circuit, Clubcircuit, Wallonie-Bruxelles Musiques (WBM) (BE), Vi.BE (Belgium Booms), Live DMA (EU), Creative Europe (EU), Culture Crew – Jeunesses Musicales Internationales, FEDELIMA (FR), Collectif Culture Bar-Bars (FR), ACCES (ES), ASACC (ES), Kultura Live (ES), Dansk Live (DK), KeepOn Live (IT), LiveKomm (DE), Norwegian Live (NO), PETZI (CH), Svensk Live (SE), VNPF (NL), LiveFIN (FI), Music Estonia Live (EE), NAKTA (LT), LPNVA (LV), Circuito (PT), Salon IKSV (TR).

DOLCE VITA JULY – AUGUST

***Dolce Vita* is the meta-project that encompasses all of the artistic adventures unfolding throughout the summer across our territory. These adventures celebrate life and advocate slowing down when everything around us seems to demand harshness or superficiality.**

Dolce Vita also explores a tension that dates back at least 400 years, between a humanity that domesticates nature and nature's wild, fantasised side. To address this

tension between nature and culture without ever falling into the trap of adopting postures, numerous disciplines are brought together for autonomous itineraries via permanent installations, scattered magical *Shelters*, land art, a large exhibition entitled *Landscape World* and a solar music festival.

As for the title, in addition to being a nod to a certain lifestyle, it clearly establishes Namur and its region as a summer destination and gateway to the south.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES - DOLCE VITA

With a recent analysis highlighting the potential of the Province of Namur to develop slow tourism, we are offering around thirty artistic and sensory routes for tourists from near and far, designed to be explored using soft mobility. Accessible all summer long and each entrusted to one or more European artists, these routes awaken the senses beyond sight, offering sound explorations, olfactory experiences, foraging activities and savoury tours (particularly gastronomic) through the landscapes of the territory.

The question of which route to take is essential to the whole idea. The city of Namur is at the heart of a province which, like many western cities, has undergone rapid disconnection from nature and natural mobility routes: urban and peri-urban areas have densified, those peri-urban areas have been paved over and agriculture has consolidated and become more intense at the expense of hedgerows, forests and other natural spaces. Our routes, close to the 8 *Confluence Hubs*, each bordered by a river or stream (chapter 4), allow us to reconnect with our environment.

The European IN SITU network (one of the largest networks of European operators working with artists from the performing arts on the issue of dialogue with the public space) has agreed to launch a specific call for projects aimed at **attracting 60 European performers** who have already been identified and supported over the long term as part of the PLATFORM programme supported by the European Union. In addition, we are developing co-productions with the "Performing Landscape", a specific network connecting performing arts with nature and bringing together renowned European venues and festivals.

All that remains is to map out these routes in detail. Any map, especially an artistic or tourist map, is the result of subjective choices. It allows us to see the world through the eyes of the person or people who drew it. The entire territory in this instance covers 3 000 km². And the City of Namur will have more than 270 km of footpaths by 2030. So as to provide guidance for the most appropriate choices, Namur 2030 has entrusted the task of identifying sites (prior to drawing up the maps) to... children! Over a two-year period, as part of the Cultural and Artistic Education Programme (the PECA of the FWB covers all French-speaking children in Belgium), primary school children from across the territory will be invited to express their attachment to the environment they are (re)discovering. They will be pointing out the places we would love to visit, the areas that frighten us, the hidden spots where we could build tree houses. Through exploratory walks, starting from the *Confluence Hubs* and accompanied by the artists, a utopia will emerge with the help of the UNamur's centre for training in sensitive landscape analysis (chapter 4).

In 2030, the artistic programme will be structured around this sensitive map, transformed into a criss-cross of roads and tracks, offering a variety of 'artistic walks' punctuated by stopping points such as: remarkable sites off the beaten track (identified in collaboration with the Province's tourist offices); events organised by the *Confluence Hubs*; live and performing arts performances; and, of course, there will be other offerings from *Dolce Vita*, such as the *Shelters*, the works of *Landscape World* to discover and the *Solar Nights* concerts (these three projects are detailed below).

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

City of Namur, Province of Namur, Maisons des Confluences (Mdc), tourist offices and houses of the Province, PECA (Parcours d'Éducation Culturelle et Artistique – Wallonia-Brussels Federation), training center for sensitive landscape analysis (UNamur), primary schools of the territory, Festival "Le Relais des Voyageurs", INSITU (EU), Oerol Festival (NL), Performing Landscape (EU), Extension Sauvage (FR), Academy and Incubator of Slow Cultural Tourism – Broumov (CZ), Down by the River – Zveza Mink Tolmin (SI), Drift – Belfast (GB).

SHELTERS - DOLCE VITA

Hides, bivouacs, night shelters: unusual shelters built on the heights of the Sambre and Meuse valleys. These structures melt into their surroundings using local materials, paying attention to specific geological features and drawing on the expertise of vocational schools, craftspeople and the local population. This is how we design and build them in collaboration with several training organisations such as IFAPME, CEFA Namur, Jeunes au Travail ASBL, L'Atelier ASBL, Les Ateliers de Pontauray ASBL and EAFC NAMUR-CADET.

Shelters offers everyone free access to intimate spaces. Total immersion in nature for an hour or a night. Designed to withstand the elements, their

locations are carefully chosen to blend into the landscape, be situated on *Alternative Routes* and embody symbolic and imaginary viewpoints on the surrounding nature. Between protection and vulnerability, the *Shelters* interact differently with the rest of the living world.

It is important to note that their design is also intended as a prototype for larger shelters in the event of a practical need for temporary housing (as the result of flooding along rivers or other consequences of extreme weather conditions). As tangible measures to raise awareness of adaptation issues, they embody Namur 2030's aim to be an accelerator for resilient transformation in the territory. The artistic coordination of the project is provided by the Derrière le Hublot association (FR).

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

ICA-WB – Institut culturel de l'Architecture Wallonie-Bruxelles (headquartered in Namur), IFAPME, CEFA Namur, Jeunes au Travail ASBL, L'Atelier ASBL, Les Ateliers de Pontauray ASBL, EAFC Namur-Cadets, Derrière le Hublot (FR), Academy and Incubator of Slow Cultural Tourism – Broumov (CZ), Architect Arks – Kiruna (SE), Live Like A Local - Lemesos (CY)

LANDSCAPE WORLD - DOLCE VITA

Namur 2030 presents a major exhibition paying tribute to the Landscape World movement, in the form of a kaleidoscopic journey through the territory's museums and cultural and heritage sites. Based on the confluence and divergence between humans and the landscape in which they live, the multifaceted *Landscape World* exhibition creates a new relationship between today's environmental issues and yesterday's representations. It is fully in line with the *Dolce Vita* programme, closely reflecting the landscapes evoked in the works (imagine, for example, of the cliffs of Freÿr painted by Gustave Courbet, whose paintings are on display in the nearby castle, or the Meuse landscapes painted by Félicien Rops, to be exhibited in a large 19th-century bourgeois house on the banks of the river).

Now, a brief history lesson. At the turn of the 16th century, the Renaissance movement was sweeping across Northern Europe. Humanity was establishing itself in the arts. Pictorial art painted on wooden panels was opening up to a new modernity, propelling nature to the forefront. Humans, now as much bystanders as actors, slipped into the picture, freeing themselves from the constraints of sacred texts. The imaginary and realistic landscapes depicted in these works, genuine panoramas unfolding from a raised viewpoint, now encompassed hills, rivers, woods and plains in a single glance. This new narrative style also influenced the Meuse region around Dinant (through

artists like Joachim Patenier and Henri Bles).

As a result of the work carried out in the studios in Bruges (Gérard David) and Antwerp (Pieter Bruegel the Elder), the pictorial atmosphere of landscape worlds spread throughout Europe: the Danube School (Albrecht Altdorfer), the studiolo of Ferrara and Venice (Titian), the Fontainebleau School and the French classical painters (Claude Lorrain and Pierre Poussin). Nineteenth-century Romanticism, fuelled at first by lithographs and later by early photographs (Louis-Joseph Ghémar), gave regional artists (Ferdinand Marinus, Antoine Wiertz, Félicien Rops and Renée Prinz) and international artists (Gustave Courbet, Victor Hugo and Jacques Guiaud) a renewed taste for exalting the grandeur of the landscape-world, both through their brushes and their poetry (Charles Baudelaire).

The views of the rivers Sambre and Meuse, as well as lithographs of the woods and steep-sided valleys of the province of Namur, ultimately gave rise to a curious 'landscapeness' (according to Louise of Orléans, the first queen of Belgium) that inspires a taste for contrasts between rock and wood, city and countryside. The landscape-world is also fed by the waterways and the industrialisation of transport (James Ensor and Paul Delvaux), at the heart of a Europe that was to be built on these forms of disruption. Finally, it should be noted that a digital tour of Franz Kegeljan's works already exists in the Namur region and will be referenced to establish a strong link and enable visitors to move between all these offerings outside the city and Namur itself.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Museums and cultural or heritage sites of the territory, Château de Freÿr, Maison Félicien Rops, City of Namur Culture Department (Franz Kegeljan trail).

THE CLIMATE IN US - DOLCE VITA

Finally, *Landscape World* serves as a base for artistic work and mediation with young people (secondary schools) on the links between landscape, climate, citizenship and activism. Presented in Bid Book 1 specifically around the work of Félicien Rops, we have decided to open the project to all the works in the exhibition.

Since 2022, climate activist groups such as Just Stop Oil, Extinction Rebellion and Dernière Génération have been making their way into the world's greatest museums to target the works of master painters such as Leonardo da Vinci, Vincent van Gogh, Gustav Klimt and Andy Warhol. Their aim is to draw attention to their causes through high-profile actions, without actually damaging the paintings. Nevertheless, some of the activists are already being sentenced to prison for their acts.

Based on these conflicting reports, the *Rops and the climate* project (now called *The climate in us*) was launched in Namur to initiate a new form of relationship between young activists, environmental organisations, museums, climate scientists and contemporary artists. By analysing ten paintings by the 19th-century Belgian painter

Félicien Rops, secondary school students in Namur explored the impact of climate change on the landscapes depicted by the artist. The project culminated in an exhibition and the publication of a 'travel guide for the future', using AI to visualise various scenarios.

This pilot initiative aimed to raise awareness among young people about ecology and art history, while promoting the responsible use of AI. It resulted in the creation of powerful works and valuable exchanges between participants. In 2030, we intend to expand the project to European partners, taking the work of *Landscape World* painters as a starting point and strengthening the care dimension of the project with modules on eco-anxiety and mental health among young people in general. The new works created will be exhibited in one or more partner cities as symbols of young people's ability, through art, to address contemporary environmental challenges in a powerful, intelligent and sensitive manner.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Namur secondary schools, museum institutions, Lemosos (CY), U19 – Create Your World – AEC Linz (AT)

SOLAR NIGHTS - DOLCE VITA

***Solar Nights* is a poetic invitation to enjoy a rare sensory experience, at the crossroads of sacred music from around the world, invisible heritage and nocturnal contemplation, designed to be a musical and spiritual journey.**

The *Solar Nights* project originated from a pop-up festival created by the team behind *Esperanzah!* (one of Belgium's major global music festivals happening in Floreffe - Province of Namur), which only took place once, in 2019. *Solar Nights* is now part of our decentralised summer programme and takes place in discreet or little-known locations in Namur's territory, such as caves, chapels, crypts, forests and quarries, which are transformed at nightfall. But above all, this project aims to promote invisible heritage and intangible cultures: songs, rituals, stories and knowledge through oral transmission.

Solo artists, voice ensembles and choirs blend traditional repertoires with contemporary creations. But the songs presented, rooted in religious or mystical traditions from around the world (Sufism,

gospel, shamanism, Buddhist chants, Corsican and African polyphonies, Eastern liturgies, etc.), share a deep connection to the sacred, communion and transcendence. *Solar Nights* invites you to a form of deep, individual and collective reconnection by engaging several senses: hearing, sight, touch, perception of space and time, in an enveloping, almost meditative atmosphere.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Esperanzah!, CAV&MA, À Cœur Joie, Festival of World Voices in Huy

GRAND PUZZLE PARADE

The grand river parade on the rivers Meuse and Sambre is a visible demonstration of the link between the various *Confluence Hubs*. It culminates at the end of the day at the Delta, in the heart of Namur, at the place called *La Confluence*, which is the point where the rivers Meuse and Sambre meet, with a grand gathering of all the local stakeholders who took part in the parade.

It's designed to be a gentle parade with limited environmental impact, as it showcases existing local boats and those built locally. Stops at the locks also provide an opportunity for the public to visit the boats and take part in activities on board or on the towpath. Through artistic interventions, these stops also serve as spaces for raising awareness of social issues surrounding rivers and the need to listen to and protect them.

Each *Confluence Hub* decorates and fits out their boat or fleet as they wish, according to themes established and chosen by local stakeholders through an open participatory process. To create the boats, the *Confluence Hubs* mainly call on artists and craftspeople from their region. Well-known local vessels join the river procession along the route: the Namourettes, river lodges, Dinant river boats, traditional Dinant bathtubs, kayaks from Anseremme and Couvin, the Waulsort water ferry, rowing boats from Wépion. The parade is accompanied by the Fous Flottants team, who have been organising a parade of small floating objects built by local people willing to get wet for several years now in Namur.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Maisons des Confluences (MdC), Delta, Zinneke ASBL-VZW, Les Capitaineries de Namur, Bateaux-mouches Dinantais, Kayaks d'Anseremme and Couvin, Traditional Dinant Bathtub Regatta, Passeur d'eau de Waulsort, Avirons de Wépion, Fous Flottants, Charlie's Factory, Namur Autonomous Port (9 ports), Batia Mosa, marine scouts, Chicane 112, Ilotopie (FR), Le Voyage à Nantes (FR), Bosch Parade (NL)

An artistic director ensures that the project is kept consistent overall and oversees the narrative unity of the project, which includes several floating European artistic proposals (the Ilotopie company, Le Voyage à Nantes, La Bosch Parade). The (successful) experiment of staging a grand river parade for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, the global expertise in floating stages of the Namur-based company Charlie's Factory, and the European contacts developed by the Sambre 2030 association are all important milestones and partnerships in the event. Another Brussels-based provider is Zinneke asbl-vzw, which organises the Zinneke Parade, a biennial parade in the city of Brussels that attracts around 2 500 participants each year. The parade was created as part of Brussels 2000.



NAMUR-NAMEN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

In 2030, the year of Belgium's bicentenary, *Namur-Namen* offers to forge new links with Flanders by organising exchanges that enable people to discover, understand and experience each other's culture.

Based on the observation that there is a growing lack of knowledge about our respective cultures, the *Namur-Namen* project revolves around the idea of experiencing each other's reality in a very tangible way, by exchanging not only artists but also teams, know-how, practices, ways of working, networks of our respective venues and operators, as well as aesthetics, humour and personal favourites. The exchange of practices enables knowledge sharing and also generates interest among the respective general public. Cultural institutions, media, local authorities, retailers and businesses meet and discuss their day-to-day activities to create new synergies and learn from each other.

Namur-Namen runs throughout our entire year as Capital of Culture, depending on the schedules of the partners who participate in these exchanges. These exchanges are planned as early as 2027 and can be seen as a specific programme shared with our Dutch-speaking neighbours, across all disciplines.

At this stage, a number of comprehensive twinning arrangements between cultural institutions are under discussion.

- **Théâtre de Namur** and **De Grote Post** in Ostend have accepted the challenge. The whole process begins before 2030 with the idea of exchanging a few artists in residence to get to know each 'house' and their ways of working better. Then, we imagine staying/living with each other for a while to get an inside look at how the «other» house works. Current discussions are serving to shape the outline of the schedule for these exchanges, a sort of Erasmus Belgica for adults. In 2030, a return to audiences in both cities is being organised in the form of a weekend event devised by the programming managers of both institutions with participating companies.
- The **public libraries** in Namur welcome and host Dutch-speaking authors and work with Flemish libraries to exchange practices.
- In terms of humour, the organisers of **Namur is a Joke Festival** have already booked bilingual performers originating from Flanders. They have also invited AVERAGE ROB, a Flemish personality DJ/influencer (with one million followers on Instagram) who promotes and champions the values of unity and national cohesion in Belgium. The festival aims to go beyond a simple programme of events and develop a platform for bilingual and Flemish artists, who will be offered preparatory sessions designed to address, dissect and de-dramatise prejudices and preconceptions, and to identify what brings us together and what sets us

apart without distancing us. The aim will be to work with artists to develop a programme that is accessible to a bilingual audience, again taking Canada's bilingual ComediHa festival as a reference point.

- Promising dialogue has been in place since 2025 between Delta (Namur) and VierNulVier (Ghent). Although different in size, these two cultural centres share a common mission: to be artistic catalysts rooted in their respective territories and committed to a wide audience and the community network. As important hubs for a diverse artistic community (from local to international), the highly motivated teams at **Delta** and **VierNulVier** are embarking on this strategic exploration with a view to building lasting bridges with the artistic community on the other side of the country, where they do not yet have any formal partnerships. The programme includes exchanges of practices, shared perspectives on programming and showcasing emerging artistic talent.
- The **Maison de la Poésie** and its current partners on the shared project 'Poète*sse de Belgique' (previously 'National poet'), **Poezie Centrum** in Ghent and the Antwerp organisation **Vonk&Zonen**, are working on ways to intensify their collaboration and exchanges based on languages and poetry.
- Also, **Namur en Mai**, the major street arts festival that attracts thousands of people to Namur every year, features an entire village dedicated to Flemish street arts, while the «**Fêtes de Wallonie**» will feature Flanders as its guest of honour in 2030. For **visual arts and museums**, while exchanges of significant works related to our themes may be envisaged, human exchange is our priority: sharing viewpoints on **mediation**, exchanges of **tourist guides** to benefit from their fresh and offbeat perspective on the city.
- We have also embarked on an exploratory phase with the local Namur television station **Bouké** and for example **ROB TV** (Leuven) dealing with some very practical topics: operating methods, financing, missions and values of local television, bearing in mind that it has been privatised in Flanders for many years, whereas in Wallonia, local television stations still have a public service mission. And what about the role of culture in news coverage? And media literacy? Will ROB TV take part in *True Stories* (see above)? What can each of us learn from the other's model?
- We are partnering with **Event Change** and **Pulse Transitionenwerk**, which support the ecological transition of cultural organisations in Wallonia and Flanders, respectively. The two organisations are jointly running the SamenDurable project, which aims to share perspectives and best practices on both sides of the language border in terms of sustainability

- and resilience among cultural stakeholders.
- However, this entire programme also requires a minimum knowledge of the other language. It must be acknowledged that learning Dutch is often seen as too difficult by many young French speakers. Without claiming to transform the educational framework for learning Dutch in our region, we use

a rich, cultural and fun programme of class twinning to foster much-needed new connections between young people from the north and south of the country. We are working with the Germanic Languages Department at UNamur to develop new, fun ways of engaging with the language, for example through gaming.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Théâtre de Namur, Namur public libraries, Namur is a Joke Festival, Delta, Maison de la Poésie, Namur en mai, Fêtes de Wallonie, local television Bouké, Event Change, UNamur, media Daar-Daar, De Grote Post (Ostend), Flemish libraries, VierNulVier (Ghent), Poezie Centrum (Ghent), Vonk&Zonen (Antwerp), ROBTv (Leuven), Pulse Transitienetwerk, ComediHa (CA – as a reference for a bilingual model), Public Libraries 2030

CONGO DYNAMO THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

In 2030, as Belgium celebrates its bicentenary, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) will commemorate 70 years of independence. This double anniversary calls for a clear-sighted and sensitive look at the ties that bind our countries and the heritage that connects us. In a geopolitical context marked by deep tensions and persistent inequalities, Namur 2030 has placed a series of

projects at the heart of its programme driven by a desire for dialogue, symbolic reparation and greater visibility for artists of African descent. Three main axes structure this multifaceted and transversal approach, developed in close collaboration with Belgian and Congolese artists and operators.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY - CONGO DYNAMO

The first part of *Congo Dynamo* is the production of a travelling exhibition (Cultural centres, *Confluence Hubs*, Libraries, etc.) blending individual and collective memories linked to the colonial period. Based on a collection of 35 testimonies gathered by the Cultural Heritage Department of the Province of Namur, this exhibition offers a sensitive and powerful look at the path taken of Belgian colonisation in the DRC. These stories, which are often overlooked, come from people of African descent, witnesses in the DRC who lived through colonisation, as well as from former colonists or their descendants.

This oral material has been donated to the archives of MusAfrica in Namur (a museum which, through an exceptional collection of objects, archives, books and photographs, offers a documented and critical insight into the many facets of the historical, cultural and human ties

that unite Belgium and Central Africa) and forms the basis for a dialogue between memory and creativity. Young visual artists will present their interpretations, juxtaposing history and contemporary perspectives in an effort to critically convey and invent new narratives. Designed to travel throughout the territory, this exhibition aims to reach a wide audience, particularly schoolchildren, with a focus on education and dialogue. although colonisation remains something of a taboo subject in the history taught in Belgian schoolbooks, it continues to have an impact, both in representations and in social relations. For many Belgians, this period remains little known. It is with this shared awareness that this project is being developed, on the cusp between the arts, memory and symbolic justice. Artistic coordination is provided by Africalia, based in Brussels, whose mission is to contribute to the recognition of culture as a key sector of development cooperation between Belgium and the DRC.

CROSS-RESIDENCES - CONGO DYNAMO

The first focus in this segment of the programme is on creating cross-cultural residencies for young Congolese and Belgian artists. Starting in 2028, a call for projects specifically designed for emerging, non-institutionalised artists with roots in parallel networks will be launched in partnership with organisations active in the DRC, such as Kin Dada, the Texaf Bliembo centre, Yolé Africa Goma, the Amani Festival, the CCAC in

Kinshasa, and the Wallonia-Brussels Cultural Centre in Kinshasa. Fifty artists will be selected based on their desire to embark on a shared creative adventure.

An initial meeting and research phase is taking place in Kinshasa, allowing artists to group together according to aesthetic and disciplinary affinities. The resulting works will then be produced in Belgium with the support of Belgian and Congolese partners and advisers who are

already involved in building links between the two countries. We should mention two of them: Pitcho Womba Konga, rapper, director and founder of the *Congolisation* festival. Pitcho has performed on stages around the world in shows by Peter Brook, Amadou Hampâté Bâ, Ruud Gielens, Joël Pommerat and many others. For the past few years, he has been creating hybrid forms

at KVS (Flemish National Theatre in Brussels). Another artist with whom he works is Bwanga Pilipili, an actress, author and co-initiator of several collective and inclusive projects, including the *Bruxelles/Africapitales* festival. Each project will culminate in a public presentation in the form of an exhibition or performance in Belgium and the DRC, where the creations and materials will remain as a starting point for further initiatives.

SUSTAINABLE COOPERATION - CONGO DYNAMO

The second focus of the project aims to promote sustainable cooperation between cultural organisations in Namur and their counterparts in the DRC. The IMEP (Haute École de Pédagogie Musicale) in Namur is initiating a twinning arrangement with the Kiamvu-Le Pont cultural centre, which is active in music education for children in the DRC, based on oral traditions and sound archives collected by the centre. This project benefits from the expertise of the highly regarded Belgian French-language programme Melchior, which is dedicated to preserving the sound heritage of all music in Wallonia. For its part, the Académie des Beaux-Arts de Namur wishes to develop educational exchanges with Congolese art schools. As well as KIKK, which seeks to encourage support for the production of digital art works as part of its Afrikikk project.

At the same time, the *Esperanzah!* festival offers a stage dedicated to Congolese and Belgian artists of African descent. It is curated by an independent artistic collective. This initiative aims to ensure a bold and representative programme, while developing a programme of cross-cultural residencies between musicians and scenographers in partnership with the Amani Festival in Goma. Finally, a large intercultural parade will wind its way through the streets of Namur before the opening of the festival, which takes place every year in August. This artistic procession involves numerous associations from diverse backgrounds, such as the CAI and local Congolese collectives. Entitled '*Breaking the silence, celebrating voices*', it brings to life in the public space the invisible memories and diverse stories of residents, artists and young people of African descent.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Cultural Heritage Department of the Province of Namur, MusAfrica (Namur), Africalia (Brussels), Pitcho Womba Konga, Bwanga Pilipili, IMEP (Namur), Académie des Beaux-Arts de Namur, KIKK, *Esperanzah!* Festival, Melchior (French-speaking Belgian program), CAI (Centre d'Action Interculturelle), local Congolese collectives, Museum of Tervuren (Brussels), Kin Dada (CD), Texaf Bliembo (CD), Yolé Africa Goma (CD), Amani Festival (CD), CCAC Kinshasa (CD), Wallonia-Brussels Cultural Center in Kinshasa (CD), Kiamvu-Le Pont (CD), CGLU



BELGEFÊTE JULY

Although Namur 2030 does not aim to organise the official bicentenary celebrations, we want to be a key partner in Namur through unique projects that reflect our DNA. Our grand folklore parade (see above) will take place on 21st July, Belgium's national holiday. Another project, born out of a meeting with a young 'newly' Belgian, is currently being written. It is called *BELGefête* and is led by Anyuta Wiazemsky, who is reflecting about how to acquire Belgian nationality.

Every year, more than 6 000 people become 'new' Belgians, with no formalities other than receiving a registered letter. Yet rituals mark major transitions in life. For Anyuta Wiasemsky, acquiring a new nationality is one of those crucial acts and moments that needs to be ritualised. So the artist is proposing to develop a series of long-term protocols focused on establishing artistic ceremonies to welcome 'newcomers' in a poetic, festive atmosphere that celebrates hospitality, diversity and citizenship – all signs of a society that is opening up and thus enriching itself.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Anyuta Wiasemsky, the cultuurple platform (FWB)

The staging and procedure for these ceremonies is currently being written and will include 'traditional' elements such as welcome speeches, a presentation (combining love and irony) of what Belgium is all about, songs, but also a toast and a final banquet. This ritual may develop, month after month, in all of the cities willing to participate, and will not be limited just to 'new' Belgians, but will also be open to any Belgian wishing to experience this moment of community.

Alongside these festive moments, the artist wishes to develop a large-scale participatory multimedia reflection to collectively imagine how these artistic rituals can be transformed into real official ceremonies.

This project does not adopt any position on Belgian policy regarding access to nationality. We plan to develop this project starting in 2027, first in our territory, and then expand it to other provinces.

FLUENCIES SEPTEMBER

Over 100 languages are spoken every day on the streets of Namur. Showcasing them through a range of complementary multidisciplinary projects is a way of celebrating and highlighting the cultural diversity that makes up our territory.

Diversity that primarily concerns the various Walloon dialects that are dying out (losing their voice) in the territory. The City of Namur committed to the 'Ma commune a dit oui' ('My council said yes') process in 2018

to ensure the protection and promotion of indigenous regional languages under the label awarded by the FWB. For its part, Namur 2030 has chosen to pay tribute to the specific languages spoken in each neighbourhood of the city, regardless of whether they are Walloon, European or non-European. The languages spoken in the neighbourhoods provide information about the mixing of communities and the waves of migration that the city has experienced. They mainly speak of the Turkish, Albanian and Congolese communities. But that's not all.

CARTONGUE - FLUENCIES

This is because languages from all over the world come together in Namur, with French as a common language, a lingua franca emerges that adapts to the mother tongues of those who speak it. In collaboration with the Public Library Network, the Namur Cultural Centre, and the House of Poetry and the French Language and our *Little*

Connexes (chapter 4), we are creating a cartography of these languages, a *Cartongue*, highlighting them by symbols (street displays, illuminated signs, via the Communication Department's street criers, chap. 5), as well as through book exchanges, language exchanges, human libraries, and even the broadcasting of proverbs in the streets (in collaboration with the Bonimenteurs theatre company).

POETRY PUBLICATION - FLUENCIES

We are also developing specific work around foreign poetry. The Maison de la Poésie has a substantial collection of poetry books in various foreign languages in its documentation centre and has maintained numerous international contacts through the organisation, over a period of ten years,

of an international poetry festival in Namur. Working with Carrefour des Cultures (an association for ongoing education and social action promoting cultural exchange), we are developing anthologies (lacking in Namur) of Albanian, Sudanese, Malaysian or other poetry (depending on the result of *Cartongue*).

POETRY MEDIATION - FLUENCIES

Together with Vis-à-Vis (a social integration association), we are working with newcomers who are taking French classes on projects related

to contemporary French poetry. To this end, we will invite leading figures from our national scene (Lisette Lombé, Joëlle Sambi, Maud Joiret, Carl Norac, Aurélien Dony, etc.).

INTIME 2030 - FLUENCIES

Working with the Intime Festival, the major Namur festival dedicated to literature that is held each year at the Théâtre de Namur, we are developing a highlight that will feature a number of different parts.

01 — First, European writers will engage in dialogue with artists from other disciplines (visual arts, music, dance, etc.) about the connections and complementarities between languages and the arts. For example, we are considering bringing together writer Jens Christian Grondahl (DK), choreographer Emma Dante (IT), writer Lisa Harding (IE), film director Cristian Mungiu (RO), writer Roberto Saviano (IT), composer Max Richter (DE), writer Sofi Oksanen (FI), photographer Rineke Dijkstra (NL), writer Elitza Gueroguiza (BG), sculptor Prune Nourry (FR).

02 — Next, we will invite authors and their translators to discuss the challenges, obstacles and specific features of European languages, with a particular focus on translation. These discussions will be interspersed with readings in the translated languages and in French. This is a unique opportunity to honour young and established translators and in so doing highlight the colossal work they do, which is often overlooked in the literary field.

03 — As an extension of *Cartongue*, we will be inviting foreign communities and residents of Namur to choose two novels, one classic and one contemporary. We will put together readings (30-minute excerpts from the books) to be presented during the festival in the

presence of the authors. The idea is to introduce people to a culture through stories: from literary monuments to contemporary tales, with an insight into how everyday life is described, how humour and style are used. Readings act as ambassadors for a culture, a way of introducing oneself and sharing one's heritage in order to imagine lives other than one's own.

This programme will be complemented by the presentation of theatrical works in foreign languages (with subtitles). This part of the programme is provided by the Théâtre de Namur, in collaboration with the CooProg platform (to invite artists who are already on tour within a reasonable geographical distance), but also with the Write Local Play Global network, which goes beyond the question of translation by developing the principle of re-creation in another language.

04 — Finally, a special focus on sign language is provided in collaboration with other cultural institutions in the area. This focus is designed for and by both deaf and hearing people. The aim is to do it in such a way as to create a space designed for deaf people, but also mixed, which has the result of raising awareness among hearing people. The programme will include practical sign language workshops in public libraries; a conference on deafness; the creation of a show; and tourist visits. It will be a unique opportunity to raise the issue of deafness and the complexity of communication between different visual and gestural languages at European level by bringing together the deaf community. This particular theme is part of the broader initiative by the City of Namur to work actively towards the integration of people with hearing impairments (chap. 4). To develop this specific programme, we are working with artists such as Sarah Navarro, Olympique dramatique, Catherine Schaub and Emmanuelle Laborit.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

City of Namur, Public Reading Library Network, Cultural Center of Namur (CCN), Maison de la Poésie, Petits lieux de liens (PLL), Cie des Bonimenteurs, Carrefour des Cultures, ASBL Vis-à-Vis, Lisette Lombé, Joëlle Sambi, Maud Joiret, Carl Norac, Aurélien Dony, Intime Festival, Théâtre de Namur, CooProg platform, Sarah Navarro, Olympique Dramatique, Catherine Schaub, Emmanuelle Laborit (FR), Jens Christian Grondahl (DK), Emma Dante (IT), Lisa Harding (IE), Cristian Mungiu (RO), Roberto Saviano (IT), Max Richter (DE), Sofi Oksanen (FI), Rineke Dijkstra (NL), Elitza Gueroguiza (BG), Prune Nourry (FR), Write Local Play Global (INT), Centre des Immigrés Namur-Luxembourg (CINL), University of Atypical Artist, Belfast (GB), European House of Languages by EUNIC Brussels Cluster: Czech Centre Brussels, Alliance Française de Bruxelles-Europe, Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux, Goethe-Institut, Liszt Institute, Istituto Italiano, The Embassy of Luxembourg, Polish Institute Brussels, Camões – Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua, Romanian Cultural Institute, Instituto Cervantes, Etxepare Basque Institute, Institut Yunus Emre

AXIS 3. SOCIOLOGICAL

WEAVING THE EDGES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

***Weaving the edges* strengthens the links between culture, the places dedicated to it on the territory and the people who are most deprived of it. This is because they are in hospitals, prisons, children's homes, youth centres, migrant centres, nurseries, psychiatric institutions, nursing homes or homeless shelters. The project adapts to each situation and weaves together an infinite number of ways of practising and viewing art and culture on the margins.**

At this stage, around 50 care, rest and support facilities have agreed to partner with Namur 2030, out of the more than 75 identified by the joint working committees. Some of them are already working with cultural operators in Namur. Others are not. Namur 2030 is designing a tailor-made project for everyone. Where possible, those receiving care will visit cultural venues. Namur 2030's role in this is to offer unique experiences with one artistic event per month at one of the 14 partner cultural venues. Relaxed performances and other inclusive initiatives are being institutionalised (chap. 4).

Then, in some cases, it is culture that moves into the care setting, with art reaching out to prisoners or babies. The proposals are diverse, consisting primarily of performances. For example, a cellist plays in a day shelter. But it may also be circus, dance, object theatre, readings, etc. And also in other forms, such as a photo exhibition in prison. Young artists graduating from art schools in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation will be commissioned for these projects. These are unique experiences that help launch their careers. In these cases, it is not a question of co-creation.

In addition, *Weaving the edges* invites more than a hundred artists to find their way into more than thirty institutions to work with residents and staff. These residencies deepen genuine encounters, with the project offering multiple opportunities to meet during two years. Together, each team creates the artistic form or forms (literature, cinema, performing arts or visual arts) that suits them best. These forms help people to inhabit their bodies and inhabit the world. Forms that deconstruct stereotypes, whether about disability, mental health issues, specific needs, neuroatypicality or vulnerable situations. The themes chosen by the crews may tie in with those of the Namur 2030 programme, such as work focusing on female artists in association with *That's' it!* or a sensitive work on homosexuality such as in *Intimacies*.

Communication supports are also affected, as one of them, the monthly magazine for 2030, will be published thanks entirely to a major editorial collaboration project between teenagers in psychiatric institutions and the Namur 2030 communication team (Q/39). By giving such sensitive extensions to the major projects of Namur 2030, we are able to increase the number of perspectives and bring them together even more. To the point where, at one stage, within the teams, it is no longer clear who is being cared for, who is there to care, who is there to give or receive what.

At the end, restitutions are organised *in situ*, but also in an external setting: in display cases, alleyways, on the banks of the Meuse, on neighbourhood walls and theatre forecourts, all in partnership with *Little Connexits*. For performing arts



proposals, the Namur Cultural Centre and the Théâtre Jardin Passion are developing protocols for performances that bring together the general public, other audiences from other *Weaving the edges* projects, and the amateur artists who are performing. This is how the margins are truly woven together. A musical theatre production will be staged after a year of writing and music workshops held in various locations (Andenne's prison, Le Grand Pré retirement home, primary schools, the oncology department of the hospital via the non-profit organisation VolontR and Espace Essentiel, the Athanor psychiatric service for adolescents, and the non-profit organisation Phénix for homeless people).

Finally, there's an institution that serves as a nerve centre for Weaving the edges: The Saint-Martin Neuropsychiatric Centre

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

The 50 care/rest/exclusion sites of the territory, Christophe Vanderwauven (Art-T), NoSauveraignauthors, Valfred (Fremok), Greta Koetz theater collective, Creahm, Cultural Center of Namur, Théâtre Jardin Passion, Saint-Martin Neuro-Psychiatric Center, Rideau!, Petits Lieux de Liens (PLL), UCL Openhub, Tamaya Sapey-Triomphe (CL/FR), Olivier Fredj (GB/FR), 3 bis F (FR), University of Atypical Artist, Belfast (GB), The City of Weaves (PL), Ability Campus & DIS Festival – Larnaka (CY), Koullou Makka collective – Lemesos (CY), Synergeo – Lemesos (CY), BREATHE (Art as Therapy) – Nikšić (ME), Social Space for Cultural Resilience – Lublin (PL), Ars Electronica – Linz (AT), Made to Measure – Liepāja (LV), ASC – Art Care Citizenship network, CARE: Culture for Mental Health (CAE), Mentalnet.eu

is being transformed into a venue for major exhibitions, a large residency programme and mixed workshops welcoming teams from other institutions. Based on the model of 3BisF in France, Saint-Martin is becoming a flagship venue for creation, refuge and, of course, connections.

Saint-Martin is also working alongside us on the TRUST project (Trauma, Refugees, Ukraine, Solidarity, Therapy) which, prior to the development of *Weaving the edges*, was already aiming to destigmatize mental health issues, foster connections between mental health centres and artists, promote art therapy as a tool for inclusion, help victims of the war in Ukraine with mental health issues through art therapy, and raise awareness of the human impact of the conflict.

NOCTIS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AT THE SOLSTICES AND EQUINOXES

When evening falls, Namur seems to shut down with the sun. Its nightlife is reputedly very limited and, as in so many other European cities, the coexistence between partygoers and residents is not always a harmonious one. However, our extensive feedback from the field suggests that this is set to change. There is a tension here that we are addressing with a major Confluence project which, more broadly, questions the way we experience night-time, move around at night and understand what goes on during these hours.

What if 2030 was the perfect time to experience Namur's nights in a new way? *Noctis* invites you to explore the night as a place that is festive, political, social and poetic, all at once. Four nights, spread out over the solstices and equinoxes, mark the seasons of a changing territory that listens to all its inhabitants, whether they are active during the day or at night. Each night has a theme. Each night is an invitation to experience new uses for urban night-time spaces. In this sense, *Noctis* is a collective, immersive and political work that brings together art, youth and citizenship to re-enchant our relationship with celebration and the sky and to invent new ways of living together.

The Spring Equinox Night Club (20th March) is a unique celebration which, from 10.00 pm to 6.00 am, transforms a number of unexpected venues (an old church, a railway shed, a vaulted cellar in a castle) scattered around Namur and the surrounding countryside into five pop-up clubs. The event is participatory, bringing together contemporary music professionals, 18-25-year-olds and members of the LGBTQIA+ community (representatives and users) to imagine together a night of emancipation through celebration. Historically, clubs have played a central role in social and identity struggles (Paradise Garage in New York or, more recently, Berghain in Berlin), providing spaces of freedom for

queer, Black, Latino and other marginalised communities. These 'safe spaces' offered much more than just a place to dance: they were also laboratories for identity and collective care. In Belgium, too, the alternative club scene is proving invaluable for young people seeking freedom of expression, solidarity and social connection.

Through this night, our aim is to question our contemporary relationship with partying as a means of emancipation, empowerment and mental health. The signs of a progressive criminalisation of partying and clubbing, observed in Namur as elsewhere since the health crisis, deserve to be examined. Night = deviance? We believe that clubs, on the contrary, represent fertile ground for intersectional and community alliances. That is why we are setting up a creative committee made up of artists and professionals from these specific networks, recruited through a call for projects. We also offer them the opportunity to work with cultural operators in Nordic countries, where Midsommar is a key moment for social bonding. Ultimately, the committee will draw up the programme, the hosting and security conditions, the scenography and the mediation and awareness-raising measures around consent, mental health, queer rights and marginalised communities.

The Night of the Summer Solstice Stars (21st June), In contrast to urban nights saturated with noise and light, this event offers a night of reconnection with silence, darkness, nature and the sky. It is an invitation to spend the night gazing at the sky. In a world where light pollution is gradually erasing our connection to the cosmos, this vigil encourages a sensitive and collective reflection on the right to a dark night and how we can better share the night-time space with all living things.

The experience takes the form of a large group walk in the

forest, starting from the Bomel quarries and co-led by two complementary guides. First, an astronomer from UNamur guides participants' gazes towards the starry constellations, tells stories of ancient beliefs and shares the latest scientific knowledge. A researcher in nocturnal ecology from the Natagora association then talks about the wildlife that awakens at night, the circadian cycle and the effects of light on living beings and a researcher in urban planning or public health (asbl Ascen) discusses light pollution, sleep patterns and the right to darkness. These presentations are discreet, in context and take place throughout the walk, at the crossover between knowledge and wonder.

Then, echoing or extending this, artistic voices punctuate the walk with readings aloud in partnership with the Maison de la Poésie, the Maison du Conte, the Intime festival, public libraries and the Passa Porta Festival (Brussels). The staging has been entrusted to the Théâtre Jardin-Passion team, located right next to the quarry site. Short texts, both ancient and contemporary, about the sky, insomnia, the forest and slowness are chosen to resonate with the places visited. They do not interrupt proceedings, but accompany a walk where all the senses are heightened and breathing becomes collective.

The Night of the Forgotten Ones of the Autumn Equinox (22nd September) takes care of those who stay awake for others. Night work is often something of a blind spot in social life, as it is carried out in silence, fragmentation and sometimes marginalisation. However, it affects a multitude of people in the care, maintenance, cleaning, delivery, security, sex, assembly workers and homeless sectors. For these women and men, the night is filled with hard work, tiredness and isolation, but also with forms of solidarity and resistance. Through various artistic and participatory formats, Namur 2030 helps to make the invisible visible, to listen, understand and document in order to transform the way we think about the social night.

On the night of the 22nd, theatrical performances, in collaboration with major Belgian theatres that commission

their artists to work on these themes, powerful light will bring the very places to life where night workers spend the hours of darkness. A spotlight event accompanied by a photo exhibition brings together European documentary artists and local social organisations, in partnership with and curated by the Charleroi Photography Museum. The project is preceded by residencies for several photographers working with the people involved and the production of a documentary co-produced with *Little Connexits*, the Brussels Video Centre and RTBF (chaer 4).

With **The Gathering of our Nights at the Winter Solstice** (21st December), Noctis will conclude with a large meeting of people dedicated to the night, combining artistic performances and participatory work. After a year of journeys, between contemplation, celebrations, caring for oneself, others and the living, it is time to come together, listen to each other, summarise and learn the lessons of this year 2030 through the prism of the night. In order to link lived experiences to practical offerings at a city level that can be replicated elsewhere, the gathering brings together all groups concerned with nightlife: artists, workers, residents, partygoers, marginalised party communities, elected officials, health professionals, urban planners, mediators, activists, the hospitality sector, and, of course, *Solar Night's* partners.

Together, they will discuss the issues raised throughout 2030 and identify areas for change, such as the symbolic and cultural recognition of invisible professions; coexistence between partygoers, residents and authorities; shared management of noise, lighting and security; extended opening hours for certain public and cultural venues in the evening; and the development of accessible and safe night-time transport. Plans are already underway to create a Namur Night Council, appoint a Night Mayor and draft a Citizens' Charter for Nightlife.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

UNamur, Natagora, ASBL Ascen, Maison de la Poésie, Maison du Conte, Intime Festival, public reading libraries, Théâtre Jardin-Passion, Petits Lieux de Liens, Centre Vidéo de Bruxelles, RTBF, Musée de la photographie de Charleroi, Paradise Garage (US), Berghain (DE), Lumo Art & Tech Festival – Oulu (FI), Solstice Festival – Oulu (FI), Citizen of All Citizens – Lemesos (CY), The Night Element – Lemesos (CY), Queer Waves Film Festival – Lemesos (CY), Coal (FR)

RESPONSIBILITY FROM MARCH TO AUGUST

Responsibility (previously *Matrimony in the City*) is one of the flagship projects of Namur 2030. With responsibility running through it as its central theme, i.e. shared ethics in public spaces, this urban art exhibition aims to address the fundamental principles of 'living well together' through a number of large-scale international artworks. These principles include equality, eco-responsibility, social cohesion and multiculturalism. Situated at the crossover point of multiple ethical positions, *Responsibility* unfolds throughout the city through various forms of artistic expression (sculptures, installations,

murals, performances) and along two main lines. The first line consists of counterpoints: commissions to artists who engage in dialogue with existing works. And, on the other hand, rendez-vous: proposals for works to enhance public spaces based on thoughtful and sensitive citizen consultation.

The Counterpoints are works by artists invited to respond to the controversial heritage of Namur's public space, whether it be the statue of Leopold II in Salzinnes, regularly covered in red paint due to the colonial

symbolism of the 'King of the Congo', or the statue of artist Jan Fabre (recently convicted of sexual harassment) sitting on a turtle which can be seen at the Citadel and which regularly sparks controversy about gender-based violence. Works preserved in leading museums, such as the Rops Museum and MusAfrica, are also examined by artists as counterpoints to the way in which the Western gaze has shaped stereotypes. The idea of counterpoint is then continued with the reactivation of major historical works by female artists in some of the city's most iconic locations (with works by Niki de Saint Phalle, for example).

The Rendez-vous are works designed as invitations to converge. The question of shared responsibility among citizens is explored through creations connected to the concepts of otherness and exchange. At this stage, two major projects are being considered. The first is a 'women's gathering,' with the creation of one or more works that echo the insecurity and feelings of insecurity experienced by women in public spaces. To achieve this, discussions and collaborations are being held with the Women's University and associations such as Garance in Namur (which has already supported the City in the development of the Casernes district), 'Genre et Ville' in Paris and 'L'architecture qui dégenre' in Brussels. At this stage, we would like to leave open the possibility

of there being a second work, the theme of which is still deliberately unknown, but linked to the idea of responsibility, since the aim is to give representatives of civil society (associations, residents' committees, schools, etc.) the opportunity to commission a permanent work of art for the public space in Namur. With this in mind, we are working with the Belgian branch of the Nouveaux Commanditaires organisation, which offers citizens the opportunity to partner with artists and commission works of art that address issues that matter to them.

Responsibility is based on a methodology that is also intended to be shared. Meaning that in addition to the artists already approached (Sophie Calle, Laura Nsengiyumva, Magda Sayeg and many others) a selection will be made in consultation with international advisors, including figures involved in gender issues (Elisabeth Lebovici, Camille Morineau, Xavier Arakistain), ecology (Nathalie Bondil, Bénédicte Ramade) and social justice (Manuel Borja-Villel, Toma Muteba Luntumbue). Coordination is handled by Julie Bawin, professor of contemporary art history at the University of Liège. She is director of the Sart Tilman Open-Air Museum of Contemporary Art and published a reference work in 2024 entitled «Public Art and Controversy, 19th-21st Centuries», tracing more than two centuries of controversy surrounding art in public spaces.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Julie Bawin, Charliequeen, Toma Muteba Luntumbue, Marine Bernard, Laura Nsengiyumva, City of Namur, Rops Museum, MusAfrica, Women's University, Garance ASBL, L'architecture qui dégenre (Brussels), Les Nouveaux Commanditaires, University of Liège, Provincial Coordination for Gender Equality, Namur Feminist Collective, Montée de Sève, 8 March Collective, Namur Pride, Passage Ouvert Ruelle Sauvage, Natur'elles Platform, La Casserole, Vie Féminine, ACRF – Rural Women's Association, Namur Tapage Collective, Genre et Ville (FR), Bien Urbain Festival – Besançon (FR)

THAT'S IT! MARCH TO JULY

In addition to *Responsibility*, the Delta cultural centre presents a more specific exhibition on the issue of matriarchal heritage, with disappearance as an act of resistance as its central theme. By choosing to take a contrary approach to the issue of the artistic heritage of women visual artists and their lack of visibility, the exhibition *That's it!* highlights their absence.

In 2018, prior to the opening of the Delta centre, the Province of Namur began a collection that made the visibility of female artists one of the cornerstones of its acquisition policy, inspired by the exemplary case of the Namur born artist Evelyne Axell (1935- 1972), who died in a tragic car accident at the age of 37 and whose works, which had been regularly exhibited, disappeared overnight. It took more than thirty years before her work was exhibited again, thanks to the joint efforts of relatives, institutions and committed art historians. Her works now have a place in major museums around the world.

This exhibition aims to examine the historical demands of female artists in order to highlight the radical nature of the feminist avant-garde and, in defiance, to showcase those who took the radical step of leaving the debate by disappearing from the system. Works considered for inclusion: Evelyne Axell, Rachel Whiteread, Charlotte Posenenske,

Adrian Piper, Lee Lozano, Guerilla Girls, Nina Beiers, Orlan, Hélène Amazou, María Magdalena Campos-Pons, Faith Ringold, Senga Nengudi, Edith Dekyndt, Marisol Escobar, Laurie Parsons, Trisha Donnelly, Francesca Woodmann, etc. A major partnership based on joint commissions and artist exchanges is underway with Larnaka 2030 and their *Herstories* project.

In parallel with the exhibition, in a spirit of co-construction, a festival of feminist performances applies the question of matrimony to the specific field of performance. The question of memory and history is particularly significant in this art form: how can we preserve the legacy of works that are ontologically ephemeral and destined to disappear? By questioning the political aspect of archives, Marina Abramović, a pioneer in the discipline who founded the Marina Abramović Institute (MAI) in 2012, has opened up the debate; but she is not alone. This festival aims to recreate historic feminist performances in the form of re-enactments, but also to further the current debate on the issue of archiving performance art.

Finally, these issues cannot be addressed without dialogue with those most affected. A participatory space has been created with the aim of fostering public discussion on matters relating to maternal heritage. Part of the Del-

ta is being transformed into a critical space and a place for co-construction, made available to visual artists so that they can develop their own open and inclusive pro-

gramme. The Belgian collective 'Les Frappeuses' has been given carte blanche.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Belgian collective Les Frappeuses, locally invited women visual artists, Le Delta, Herstories – Larnaka (CY), Invisible Women – Zveza Mink Tolmin (SI), JU Zahumlje Nikšić (ME), The Brontë Parsonage Museum, Bradford (GB)

INTIMACIES MAY TO SEPTEMBER

***Intimacies* is an exhibition that aims to build a sensitive, intergenerational photographic history of queer love. Making space for these tender images, whether in black and white or colour, is an act of local and collective memory. It may even be an act of healing. And it is also a way of imagining other futures.**

Belgium is one of the leading countries in terms of LGBTQIA+ rights. The first same-sex marriage in Wallonia was celebrated in Andenne in 2003, the year they were legalised in Belgium. With *Intimacies*, set in the delightful surroundings of an abbey, this desire to shift the focus away from the struggles and demands of LGBTQIA+ lives is reflected in the images on display, which show what is too often rendered invisible: *Intimacies*, gestures of love and tenderness. The idea for *Intimacies* arose from this shift: to move away from images (which are absolutely necessary, by the way) of struggles, not to oppose them, but to extend them into the depth of a life lived or prevented, in these tiny and immense territories where often silent forms of resistance play out.

Through a constellation of images (artistic photographs, videos, professional and amateur archives), *Intimacies* reveals a queer memory of emotional, intimate and family ties that are non-normative but not 'outside the norm'. The exhibition, which combines artistic, scientific and participatory dimensions, affirms an intergenerational and sensitive dialogue made up of the living foundations of a collective narrative in the making.

The project is scientific because an interregional research team with a doctoral project at UNamur (and partners in Flanders and art colleges) combines this subject matter with work on little-known archives such as those of Rosa,

a Flemish centre in Brussels focusing on gender and feminism, and the prestigious collections of photography museums in Charleroi, Antwerp and Rotterdam. Collecting fragile memories means using the past to create works in the present and for the future.

Taking its inspiration from the approach of Hélène Giannecchini, a French writer and art historian whose work combines archives, contemporary photography and minority narratives, *Intimacies* adopts a non-linear, fragmentary and sensory approach, exploring major photographic narratives, such as those of American photographers and artists Donna Gottschalk and Carla Williams or the more cinematic work of French photographer Sébastien Lifshitz and Belgian photographer Julie M. Free. The Belgian collective Bye Bye Binary complements the museum's rigorous approach with its inclusive scenography, creating a powerful immersive experience in which each work is treated with care. It's a way of saying: we were there. We are here. We will be here. Performance tours with researchers and activists such as lesbian feminist Marian Lens give pride of place to oral storytelling. Friendship, lesbian love and community solidarity become forms of narrative that engage with the world. *Intimacies* also aims to be a welcoming space for contemporary stories, thanks to a collection area at the end of the exhibition. Mosaika, a project developed by students at the HEAJ, is a container where anyone can leave a message, a song or a text. For the opening, we are presenting 'All About Love', a performance by Justine Theizen, a hip-hop and queer dancer, which brings together the hip-hop and queer communities using a format created by the hip-hop community. But far from the masculine clichés of strength and overcoming, this battle is structured around new queer codes

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

UNamur, HEAJ, Museum of Photography Antwerp, Bye Bye Binary, Justine Theizen, Marian Lens, Rosa (Flemish center in Brussels on gender and feminism), ULiège, University of Antwerp, Iselp, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Déclencheur collective, Namur Photographic Archives, Aspekt collective, Namur Pride, IATA, UNIA, Museum of Photography Rotterdam (NL), Sebastien Lifshitz (FR)

RADICAL HAPPINESS JUNE

Inspired by the famous saying of Emma Goldman, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution", *Radical Happiness* is a collective invitation to get bodies and ideas dancing.

Radical Happiness celebrates dance as a space for social

transformation, encounter and emancipation. An ode to freedom, shared joy and diversity of expression. The project unfolds in three complementary spaces and times: on the street, on stage and at home.

Out in open public spaces, a huge parade/demonstration will move across the city, from the train station to the Confluence. Open to all, with no technical requirements, it will bring together groups of citizens who, over several months, will be accompanied by professional choreographers in the creation of collective choreographies. Participants (associations, schools, social or medical institutions) will choose something to be proud of and celebrate. Each group is free to create its own choreography, slogans, costumes and stage design. The project will be rolled out at *Little Connexits* and *Confluence Hubs*, with a focus on local involvement, participation and diversity of representation.

Overall coordination will benefit from the expertise of the Lyon Dance Biennale (an international benchmark for this type of event) and the '1 km de la Danse' project developed by the Centre National de la Danse in Paris. In close collaboration with the major choreographic centre Charleroi Danse, several choreographers from Belgium (some of whom are already involved with DELTA in Namur, including Marinette Dozeville, Julien Carlier and Leslie Mannes) and from the EU are supporting the groups.

To generate excitement around this invitation to dance, we have commissioned artists Mouna Andraos and Melissa Mongiat from *Daily tous les jours*, a Canadian art and design studio, to create a large installation on the Confluence esplanade. By quoting *Daily tous les jours*, "All cities should have a dance strategy". Because it's a

way for cities to become more sustainable and resilient. The artwork is conceived in situ based on public consultations. For example, their Bollard project is a terminal with lines embedded in the ground that, when touched (by foot or wheelchair), trigger a variety of vocal harmonies. By prolonging the touch, or collaborating with others, compositions emerge. Permanently integrated into the urban architecture, the work allows the public to explore the space through dance. This encourages the emergence of new habits and connections between people.

Echoing the urban festival, the Delta is offering a programme of contemporary dance performances **indoors and outdoors**. It highlights different forms of choreography that celebrate the body as a place of storytelling, empowerment and care. A dozen performances will accompany this movement and offer the public a diverse and lively interpretation of contemporary dance.

Finally, through the '*My kitchen is a dancefloor*' project, people are invited to transform their homes into places of fun and dance. There will be two formats. Either a festive moment with a DJ where your home becomes the centre of a small neighbourhood party. Or a professional session (salsa, breakdancing, tango, jazz or contemporary dance, etc.) for a group class at home with your neighbours. These gestures of trust, light-heartedness and togetherness extend the collective momentum of a city on the move into the private sphere.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Marinette Dozeville, Julien Carlier, Leslie Mannes, Le Delta, Charleroi Danse, Petits Lieux de Liens, Maisons des Confluences, local dance schools: New Espace Danse, Apsara Dance, Ballets du Parc, Chic a Funk, Big Nam ASBL, Salsanam, Mix'n Dance, Biennale de la Danse de Lyon (FR), Centre national de la Danse (FR), *Daily tous les jours* – Mouna Andraos & Melissa Mongiat (CA)



PLAYGROUND JULY-AUGUST

Playground is a project aimed at making a play space created by children themselves. A unique educational, artistic and civic adventure. In a context of ecological and social transition, this project promotes new attitudes and solemnly explores the sensitive and imaginative resources of childhood. So that we can reinvent ourselves collectively.

Inspired by the work of Charles Fourier, Célestin Freinet and, more recently, Edith Maruéjols, who has asked probing questions about children's living conditions, the lack of spaces for them to be free and the limits imposed on the development of their passions, *Playground* paves the way for a different childhood (more confident, joyful and free) and a different public space. *Playground* is a challenge to the city to become child-friendly by trusting children to invent a space of their own.

The project encourages children's independence and recognises their ability to participate in community life. *Playground* aims to bring about urban and political change through practical actions that promote cooperation and knowledge sharing. It goes far beyond simply building a playground, becoming a social project in its own right. Fun workshops enable the first groups of child builders to learn essential skills: construction techniques, collective management, and the development of a shared imagination. With the support of *Little Connexits*, community centres,

youth clubs and local associations, these children pass on the knowledge they have acquired to future generations. The 'real' construction project will take shape in spring 2030, and the opening of the site will be celebrated in the height of summer.

This project is not limited to a single space. It unfolds throughout the city, in the spirit of the 'youth population,' drawing on other festive and symbolic traditions. For example, during the idle days at the end of the school year, we are planning to colour the city with joyful, artistic and collective activities carried out by children in public spaces. On the day *Playground* is inaugurated, a grand carnival-like celebration will feature a shared vocabulary of capes, sticks, bird calls and bales of straw transforming the space into a theatre of free play and imagination.

Artistic coordination has been entrusted to Julien Fournet, a director and playwright who has been conducting artistic and philosophical research into the political role of children for several years. Not as objects to be protected, but as political subjects. He's the one who created the show **Enfance Majeure** in 2025, which has been performed at numerous international festivals. His approach combines intellectual rigour, humour and inventiveness. The expertise of the Domaine de Chevetogne, a large natural and recreational estate in the province, is also being called upon to ensure the technical feasibility of the project.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Petits Lieux de Liens (PLL), neighborhood houses and youth centers of the City of Namur, Domaine de Chevetogne, children builders of the territory, Julien Fournet (FR), Wild Kids Sanctuary – Lublin 2029 (PL), Youth Maker Space – Larnaka 2030 (CY), Évora (PT)

ACTION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR / FINAL IN SEPTEMBER

To produce a film that embraces the whole city, not about, but with its population is the aim of the Action project. To be a laboratory for participatory cinema.

Namur has long been a city of the cinema, with major European personalities such as Cécile de France, Benoît Poelvoorde, Benoît Mariage, Paloma Sermon-Dai and Joe Rohanne. The latter, who is a specialist in participatory cinema, is directly involved in *Action*. Namur can also count on enjoying a festival with global connections (FIFF), the hosting of period film shoots, a world-renowned special effects company (Dreamwall), a higher education institution for animation, a preparatory class for actors, two cinema complexes and, coming soon, a major audiovisual media hub (Boukè, HEAJ and RTBF).

With Joe Rohanne and all these partners, Namur 2030 is offering a unique collective adventure on a city-wide scale: the production of a feature film entirely made by the population (script, acting, sets, costumes and editing) and developed with the support of several *Confluence Hubs* and *Little Connexits*. The project is being carried out in two stages to allow people to get involved in just one

aspect of the adventure if they prefer, while giving others the opportunity to join in along the way.

THE DREAM MACHINE (2026 - 2029)

Action sets a minimal theme to kick off the adventure: science fiction and imagination. Like the films by Apichatpong Weerasethakul, we will be offering local residents via the *Little Connexits* and *Confluence Hubs* (chapter 4) an opportunity to relax in spaces designed for napping and dreaming, in the truest sense of the word. The Namur 2030 dream machines have a curtain that can be pulled back like in a photo booth, allowing participants to leave 'something' (an idea, intuition, desire, gesture, image) with costumes also available for use. This Mosaika device, which is the same one used in the *Intimacies* exhibition (and found in the streets of cities such as Seoul), allows people to tell their stories independently, without the need for the Namur 2030 team to be present.

Alongside this, working with identified groups (mainly schools and colleges) and with people who are unable to travel to the *Confluence Hubs* or *Little Connexits* (retirement homes, hospitals, refugee centres, etc.), we will be working

with smartphones and extremely lightweight cameras. This will take the form of workshops or, as with the dream machines, independently. During the workshops, the device allows participants to rethink the concept of 'directing actors' by aligning 'acting' with 'playing' in a playful sense. Working independently, the cameras (developed by Joe Rohanne on a previous project) will allow participants to film themselves by placing the camera on a piece of furniture or on their own chest. *"The mobile cameras offer a variety of image qualities, providing other points of view, shifting the gaze, showing other ways of representing oneself (...) I strongly believe that a camera can be more than just a technical object: it can be a powerful tool for individuation and creating a sense of communityship. And (...) it can become an instrument of care"*.

At the same time, the supervisory team will lay the foundations for a particular scenario, the progress of which

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

FIFF, Dreamwall, HEAJ, Boukè, RTBF, Namur Academic Cluster (PAN), MdC, PLL, TWIST cluster, Small Bang, Cinex, IAD

is shared with participants during workshops, in *Confluence Hubs* and *Little Connexits*, and via a dedicated blog on the Namur 2030 website.

GRIMOIRE OF FUTUROLOGY (2029 - 2030)

This basic scenario, with the footage accumulated during Take 1, will serve as input for '*Grimoire of Futurology*', i.e. the film itself. To enable truly collaborative cinema, this *Grimoire* is written based on the work of several groups brought together in writing workshops coordinated by Joe Rohanne and a team of professional screenwriters and editors. Along the way, participants will acquire new skills, particularly in what is known as 'kino' (editing, but also stop motion, live film, special effects). The final form is unknown, but RTBF will support the co-production and distribution of the result, whatever it may be!

IN UNISON

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR - FINAL IN DECEMBER

To encourage new confluences or connections between generations and communities, there is nothing like singing together, a universal practice that promotes both social interaction and well-being. The euphoric and unifying effects of singing have been proven

scientifically. In Namur 2030, these projects are taking shape with dozens of associations and institutions that specialise in this field. Namur is recognised as the capital of singing, home to a federation counting 280 choirs in Wallonia and Brussels and 10 000 singers.

A NEW SONGBOOK - IN UNISON

Namur 2030 is working to enrich the already impressive Melchior digital platform, which catalogues all traces of Walloon oral musical heritage. Throughout the 20th century, researchers and enthusiasts travelled from village to village, amassing a vast and little-known treasure trove, a legacy of varied and sometimes very ancient traditions. Beyond making these musical archives available on its website, Melchior seeks to promote the practice and reinvention of this repertoire through educational projects carried out in particular at the Royal Higher Institute of Music and Pedagogy in Namur, in collaboration with various educational stakeholders.

With these partners, starting in 2027, we will further enrich the repertoire by collecting new material from the singing traditions of all communities of foreign origin present in Namur, particularly those that have arrived in recent years. Through operators who work specifically with these people, we will reach out to as many singers as possible, including those in the two refugee centres in the region. Using all of the material from Melchior, we will be publishing a songbook with simple arrangements and easy-to-read music, allowing all groups, choirs, schools,

and individuals to enjoy it throughout 2030. It will be distributed across several aspects of our Capital project: learning to sing as a group in *Little Connexits*, songs sung during the *Radical Happiness* parade, pop-up choirs during *Mystery Meetings* and, of course, during the *Slow Opening*.

To bring songs from different cultures to life, the songbook draws on the natural links that exist in oral tradition: cultural borrowings, recurring themes, and the transnational circulation of lyrics and melodies. Following these threads, the songbook travels between different repertoires, using the musical traditions of Wallonia as its base. The songs are also rearranged by contemporary artists, some of whom are very famous, such as the singer Stromae, a hugely successful Belgian artist of Rwandan origin. IMEP provides training in two ways: video clips accessible to all and face-to-face sessions run by IMEP education students for specific audiences (schools, communities, disadvantaged groups).

POLYPHONIA MUNDI - IN UNISON

Polyphonia Mundi, created by digital arts companies Superbe Interactive and Hovertone, is an extraordinary choral experience: an interactive installation in which each visitor becomes both conductor and choir. Their voices are captured, transformed and multiplied, becoming the raw material for a sensitive polyphony, from baritone to soprano, conducted with a magic wand.

As part of Namur 2030, the installation is taking on a new dimension. We will be enriching the voice database by involving speakers who represent the linguistic diversity of the territory. The aim is to build a European phonemic database based on regional and national languages, promote local vocal heritage, and explore the diversity of songs and intonations across Europe.

From Walloon choirs participating in the Melchior project to partners from Italy, Germany, Poland and Spain, a vast collection of phonemes is being launched. The sounds will be recorded in high

definition during mobile workshops. In collaboration with linguists, each typical phoneme (the Walloon “w”, the French “nasal”, the German “ü”, etc.) is identified, archived and classified to feed the algorithm. From this material, a phonemic songbook is designed. Inspired by linguistic methods, it guarantees that each language is properly represented and enables the AI to compose in all registers.

Innovation also has a legal side to it. The choir members participating in the project will benefit from a framework that guarantees their rights, including resale rights on the future use of their voices. This is all achieved through a protocol inspired by British trusts, which questions the economic models of AI and voice databases. In short, the installation does not replace the artist, it orchestrates them. AI is becoming a coordination technology, an invisible conductor that brings human voices into harmony, like a collective ritual that is co-constructed with each activation. *The Call*, a project presented by Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst at the Serpentine Gallery in London in 2025, is a reference point in the spirit of what we want to develop in Namur.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Superbe, Hovertone, CAV&MA, IMEP, À Cœur Joie and the many music and singing schools of the province, «Don Alfio Conti» choir and «Giuseppe Guzzardi» choir – Adrano (IT), Choir of Eden - Institute for tourism, culture, youth and sport Brda (SI), Epilogi Cultural Movement – Lemesos (CY), Liepāja (LV), Tartu (EE), Clari Cantus – Broumov (CZ), Évora (PT), Sami Jójiking – Kiruna (SE), Choir «Homin» (UA), ECA – European Choral Association

CLOSING CEREMONY – 24 HOURS OF SHARED SINGING DECEMBER

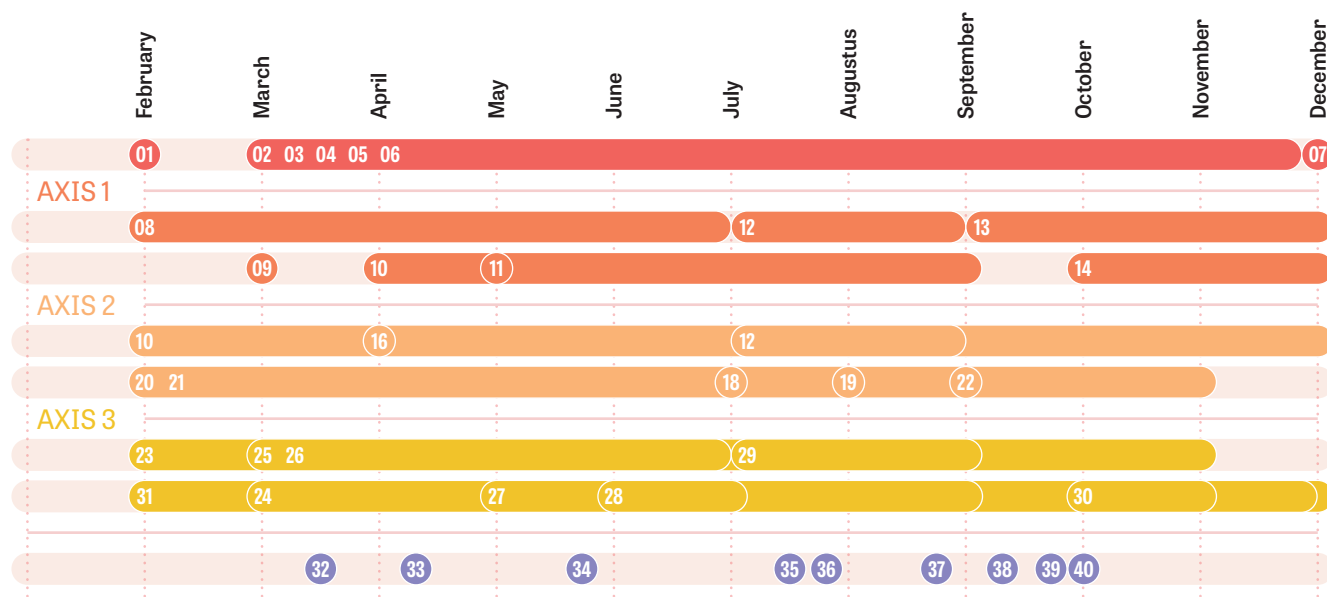
To round off our year as Capital of Culture, we are planning a grand finale showcasing all the voices that have come together over the course of the year. They will be accompanied by all the choirs of the territory. This grand finale will take place from noon to midnight at a number of different venues so that everyone can participate. A team of IMEP choir directors will be present at each venue to conduct the singing. The À Cœur Joie association and Jeunesses Musicales are mobilising their networks and expertise to make this a great moment of shared singing. We are also developing this project in partnership with the world-renowned Queen Elisabeth Competition, which will focus on singing in 2030.

During these twelve hours, symbolic baton changes will be staged to ensure that the singing never stops. Because singing is also an intimate and interpersonal experience, and to avoid the (legitimate) temptation to create a large gathering, we have entrusted the artistic direction of this final evening to Liévine Hubert. A multidisciplinary artist (musician, performer, philosopher), Liévine has been developing protocols around

singing and vocal polyphony in connection with dance, theatre and other somatic practices for many years. For our European partners, this day will also be shared on the airwaves. Together with RTBF and the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), we are creating a radio station that will broadcast a 24-hour marathon featuring all the voices of Europe. Choirs register in advance and sing live. The challenge is twofold: live singing and no silence. This is to ensure that the magic works perfectly. And to thank everyone one last time for this wonderful year we have created together.

ARTISTS & PARTNERS

Jambes World Folklore Festival (world music and dances), Namur en Chœurs, CAV&MA, Namur Chamber Choir, Cappella Mediterranea, Douce Mémoire, Leonardo García Alarcón, IMEP, À Cœur Joie, Jeunesses Musicales, RTBF, Queen Elisabeth Competition, Liévine Hubert, European Broadcasting Union (EBU), «Don Alfio Conti» choir – Adrano (IT), «Prevosto Pietro Branchina» choir – Adrano (IT), Nova Gorica and Gorizia (SI/IT), Lemesos (CY), Liepāja (LV), Tartu (EE), Sami Jójiking – Kiruna (SE)



Cross-cutting projects

- 01 Slow Opening · €€€
- 02 F(r)ictions · €€
- 03 Rocket · €€
- 04 Now it's us!
- 05 Little Connexits · €€€€
- 06 Confluence Hubs · €€€€
- 07 Closing ceremony · €

Axis 1

- 08 Folklore 2.0 · €€€€
- 09 Mystery meetings · €
- 10 Sow Food · €€€
- 11 True stories · €
- 12 Builtopia · €
- 13 Released Expressions · €€
- 14 Bestiary · €€

Axis 2

- 15 Sambre 2030 · €€€
- 16 Music side · €
- 17 Dolce Vita · €€€€
- 18 BELGefête · €
- 19 Grand puzzle parade · €€
- 20 Namur / Namen · €€
- 21 Congo Dynamo · €€
- 22 Fluencies · €€

Axis 3

- 23 Weaving the edges · €€
- 24 Noctis · €€
- 25 Responsibility · €€€
- 26 That's it! · €
- 27 Intimacies · €
- 28 Radical Happiness · €€
- 29 Playground · €
- 30 Action · €€
- 31 In unison · €

Annual events · €€

- 32 Namur is a joke
- 33 Folknam
- 34 Namur en mai
- 35 Belgian National Day
- 36 Esperanzah!
- 37 Solidarités

- 38 Fêtes de Wallonie
- 39 FIFF
- 40 KIKK

BUDGET KEY

- € = de 100 K € à 1 M €
- €€ = de 1 M € à 2 M €
- €€€ = de 2 M € à 4 M €
- €€€€ => 3.9 M €

Q/07

HOW WILL THE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES BE CHOSEN?

Since it is impossible not to participate in the world (see Introduction), making choices is never a neutral matter. We are conscious of our choices and accept them as forms of resistance against collective paralysis, diffidence and withdrawal into oneself. From the very beginning, we have given priority to **artistic excellence**, combined with a **collaborative method**. To write the projects, events and activities, committees have been formed bringing together artists, as well as a very wide range of local cultural and community actors, scientific experts, curators and several private organisations.

Together, we have identified three methods for implementation. The first method is based on **associated curation**. It does not in any way contradict our horizontal approach. It provides the necessary coordination for multi-faceted projects. The individuals we call upon are chosen as much for their expertise as for their ability to support, communicate and make decisions. Juliette Bibasse and

Joanie Lemerrier (FR) for *Bestiary* act as a link between their networks of international activist artists and the territory. For *Responsibility*, Julie Bawin (BE), supported by an international committee, brings a unifying vision to a sensitive subject. Giovanna Massoni (IT) offers a generous, multidisciplinary European interpretation for *Sow Food*. Chloé Colpé (BE), director of Intime, contemporary literature festival, contributes her in-depth knowledge of the issues at stake. The same goes for Marie du Chastel (BE), artistic director of the KIKK Festival, a leading figure in digital arts and winner of the 2020 Francophone Woman of the Year award. Added to that are the European collective curations (16 countries from eastern and western Europe) such as for *Music Side* and *Released Expressions* (Kosovo, Belgium and France). In short, most of our major events now have a clearly identified management team that is committed to working with us to make them a success.

The second method is the one using **calls for projects**.

Our first report expressed some reservations in this regard. Nevertheless, calls for projects are a relevant and essential tool, provided they are used sparingly and judiciously. We use these calls in a targeted manner when we aim to reach specific profiles or open up new perspectives. Each call is based on a precise methodology, as well as accessible information, targeted and accessible dissemination, transparent criteria, genuine diversity in the composition of the evaluation juries, and respect for the work undertaken by the artists in advance. Examples: the call for European projects in partnership with IN SITU for *Dolce Vita*; the mixed call for young Congolese and Belgian artists for *Congo Dynamo*, another for young graduates of higher education art schools in WBF for *Mystery Meetings*; or the collaborative call with EAAE representing 130 architecture schools to select the architects for *Builtopia*.

Finally, the third method involves our **participatory and innovative processes**, which are totally laboratory-based for some, but also focused on precise protocols. In these human adventures (in the truest sense of the word), without detracting from the quality of the result, it is the processes themselves that are key. Namur 2030's support ranges from consultation with a view to creation and dissemination, including executive production and mediation. This is at the heart of our mantra of Confluences, whose aim is to broaden and diversify access to culture for all segments of society, with a particular focus on accessibility, children, young people and several marginalised and vulnerable communities. All of this is discussed in detail in Q05 and throughout Chapter 4, but here are some of the individuals and groups involved: Sara Selma Dolorès, Greg Duret, Bwanga Pilipili, Pitcho Womba Konga, Joe Rohanne, Sambre 2030, the Brussels Video Centre, the University of Us, Les Fous Flottants, etc.

The general management and artistic direction for Namur 2030 are responsible for coordinating all three processes with specific support from:

- **The Involvement and Inclusion Department**, which is responsible for the close, multi-dimensional monitoring required by participatory processes, with a constant focus on cultural rights, plurality of narratives, gender equality and accessibility across all programming;
- **The European and International Partnerships Department**, which ensures a strong European

dimension and active networking;

- **The Sustainability Department**, which ensures compliance with sustainability principles, particularly within the digital programme.

Dedicated persons carry these issues and embody them with all partners, from local to international, while keeping the organisation as lean as possible to ensure that maximum resources are available for artistic projects and their implementation (particularly in terms of mediation). In the perspective of lasting legacy, our vision is also to empower our cultural partners, whom we invite to work with us (or even on our behalf) on artistic programming. This helps to promote and support cultural infrastructure and their teams.

These governance and budgetary subdivisions reflect choices that are also shown in the balanced representation of local and international artists. Without this being a discriminatory measure, we are striving towards:

- **20% of projects led by artists and performers from the province:**

While this percentage may seem modest, it is nevertheless ambitious given the findings regarding the low numbers of professional artists residing in Namur (Q/09 & 10).

- **40% of projects entrusted to Belgian artists and performers:**

In this figure, we include artists from Brussels and Flanders, disregarding the administrative and political barriers associated with our Belgian identity.

- **40% of the programming will be international:**

In addition to inviting renowned artists, resources will be allocated to projects that are sometimes costly: long term protocols, cross-cultural residencies rooted in the local area, calls for specific and sensitive projects, long-term links with Africa, etc.

We are seeking to achieve **parity between men and women**, as well as a special focus on LGBTQIA+ artists and people with disabilities; this will be without rigid quotas, but with inclusive recruitment and selection processes.

Ultimately, it is not a question of drawing up manifestos or confining creation to a discourse of demands, but of making every artistic act, every celebration, every encounter between audiences a genuine attempt to achieve the confluences we

Q/08

THE WAY IN WHICH THE CULTURAL PROGRAMME WILL COMBINE LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TRADITIONAL ART FORMS WITH NEW, INNOVATIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL FORMS OF CULTURAL EXPRESSION

Namur's international credibility in this field is already well established and has been strengthened since the launch of the bid. In June 2025, UNESCO invited our General Manager at the Global Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. She is one of 12 personalities selected worldwide to speak on the future of cultural and creative industries. This example illustrates the potential of Namur's digital ecosystem to promote and preserve tangible and in-

tangible heritage, thereby becoming a leading player in this field on a global scale.

However, our contribution as Namur 2030 goes beyond the digital realm. The potential differences between traditional art forms and contemporary expressions are at the heart of our confluence laboratory. Imagining the future of Namur can only be done by building on the traces of the past, not as a fixed legacy, but as a living network of roots and stories

to be connected with today. This dialogue runs through our entire project and is particularly evident in the first axis of our artistic programme, while also informing many other aspects, whether ecological, intergenerational or decolonial. About **historical heritage**: We enhance it by demystifying it, reinvesting it in unexpected ways, and inviting younger generations to look at it differently, without distance or prejudice. Hence the importance given to the Citadel, where *We won't run(a)way!* shake things up with its joyful and uninhibited parade; where *Released Expressions* unfolds to superimpose graffiti, collages and historical wall marks, where *Builtopia* settles in with hundreds of young people to bring heritage into dialogue with contemporary architecture, urban cultures and modern music. Visitors can celebrate the opening of 2030 in places not usually dedicated to festivities, as well as welcome young artists in residence in heritage spaces and listed sites for *Mystery Meetings*, create a fine food laboratory in a church for *Sow Food*, or pass through iconic locations as part of *Dolce Vita*, etc. These projects completely reinvent the way we experience History.

Some devices go even further, creating a real counterpoint between the past, the present and the world yet to be created. *Bestiary* confronts classical iconography with a post-anthropocentric interpretation of the ecological crisis. *The climate in us* transforms 19th-century paintings using new technologies to raise awareness of climate change. Through these artistic protocols, history becomes a subject for debate, diversion and (re)creation.

Our relationship with heritage goes beyond buildings. The promotion of intangible heritage plays a transversal role for Namur 2030, the reason why we're developing *Fri(c)tions*. The intangible heritage also plays a central role in all the projects of *Folklore 2.0*, created to confront shapes of the past in the languages of the present. Other projects pursue this

same logic, such as *Bestiary*, especially through its Youth Literature dimension.

Landscape World, *The climate in us*, *Grand Puzzle Parade*, *Sambre 2030*, *Dolce Vita* and *Sow food* call into question our views of **natural or farming spaces**, of what we call 'terroir' with environmental challenges that didn't exist just a few decades ago. Which new ideas at the crossover point between traditional and innovative artistic and civic practice.

All of this is sometimes vaguely or even closely related to generational issues. In *Action*, *The climate in us*, and all of our projects that blend amateur song and dance practices, the whole project is set up to create encounters. The Melchior digital tool offers new arrangements of traditional songs, brought together in a shared, intergenerational songbook. Tackling this **intergenerational** issue head-on, beyond simply initiating dialogue, means asking ourselves how we can **take care** of others across generations. *Weaving the edges* offers it specifically between 'vulnerable' individuals. The latest version of the project tested by the Théâtre de Namur was so successful that the children involved in the programme organised a day trip with the elderly independently of the operator. *Little Connexes*, by drawing inspiration from the experience of Cinex, a neighbourhood centre and ultra-dynamic community space, facilitates intergenerational encounters. As for *Intimacies*, this is an exhibition heavily influenced by the idea of healing between different generations of homosexual people.

For its part, *Congo Dynamo*, by asking the **former colonial question**, also addresses how different generations have positioned themselves and continue to position themselves in relation to their history, offering culture as a way out of certain ideological impasses.

Q/09 & 10

HOW DID THE CITY INVOLVE LOCAL ARTISTS AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CULTURAL PROGRAMME? GIVE PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

The process of putting together this whole bid involved more than 5 000 people in the space of just a few months (chap. 4). At the heart of this dynamic were the artists and cultural operators of the territory. We involved them at every stage, through a dozen thematic meetings, around twenty working groups and more than a hundred individual interviews. This approach to co-constructing the artistic programme was a natural choice, Namur 2030 was conceived from the outset as a tool for cultural and territorial development, firmly rooted in the existing fabric and offering new, sustainable and collective opportunities for artists, operators and cultural institutions.

Our objective, described in Q/02, is to participate fully in strengthening the long-term capacity of this ecosystem, which is made up of socio-cultural operators and the local creative scene, of course, but also communities, volunteers and involved teams. To build our capacity development programme tailored to the realities of our territory, we are working closely with the Matera 2019 team and drawing

inspiration from the Build-up programme, which explores key themes such as encouraging collaboration between stakeholders, reducing dependence on public funding, developing international networks, experimenting with new sustainable and entrepreneurial models, and raising awareness of social issues.

Our efforts over the past few months have been focused on this goal and have resulted in the consolidation of a set of elements that already directly benefit artists and operators in :

- their relations nationally and internationally;
- their relationships with their audiences and potentially new audiences;
- their strategy regarding children and young people;
- their strategy for sustainability;
- their stance on digital matters ;
- breaking down barriers within their ecosystem and with all stakeholders.

METHOD OF COLLABORATION

Our collaborative approach to working with local operators and artists is based on a simple principle: establishing a long-term dialogue that allows us to define, together, the outlines of projects and the roles of each participant in accordance with the principles of a co-production agreement. Everyone has a clear role, with defined tasks, rights and responsibilities.

This common framework applies at all levels: whether it concerns the dramaturgical intentions formulated for a commission, the carte blanche given to artists, the programming choices made by partner venues, or the protocols for citizen involvement. The whole project will be developed by editorial committees set up in 2026. These committees will be forums for debate and joint development, where the structure of the projects, their timing, how they will be linked, the mediation tools to be developed and the European networks to be activated will be defined. Each committee is led by the artistic director or the relevant project managers, in close collaboration with the Sustainability, Involvement and Inclusion (and therefore Youth) and Europe departments of the Namur 2030 team.

CULTURAL PARTNERS IDENTIFIED

For each artistic project, a list of cultural partners is detailed in Q06. This list remains open. In the coming months, we will continue to invite organisations to join the editorial committees, encouraging each one to approach the themes in its own way. La Maison de la Poésie, for example, has expressed the wish to develop a programme focused on the female authors who have been overlooked in relation to the *That's it!* exhibition. The Théâtre de Namur is planning an animal-themed version of its horror festival in conjunction with *Bestiary*. To ensure editorial consistency across the territory and throughout the year, the *Confluence Hubs*, described in detail in Chapter 4, are also drawing inspiration from the artistic programme's themes to build their 2030 season. For example, the *Confluence Hub* in Andenne is proposing to stage an exhibition of ceramics as part of *Dolce Vita*; in Gembloux, there is an immersive tour of the Château de Petit-Leez, combining heritage, performing arts and intergenerational participation. In Floreffe, there is a slow tourism art tour with rural itineraries, temporary exhibitions and scenographic shelters.

The major existing events that shape the territory's cultural offering are included in the Namur 2030 programme, with the possibility of tailored support to amplify their reach in 2030. Provided that they respect the vision of Namur 2030: artistic excellence, openness to European artists, focus on young people, inclusivity, sustainability and a strong link to the principle of confluence. Hence the Namur en Mai festival, which offers a programme focused more specifically on Flanders, or the Echasseurs Namurois, who are attempting the symbolic feat of bringing together 5000 stilt walkers during the «Fêtes de Wallonie», in a united European and multi-generational spirit.

In general, the doors of Namur 2030 remain open to operators. It is not too late to join either the committees,

or the dynamic of the Confluence Hubs. We invite them to bring the themes to life according to their own sensibilities.

STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPING APPROPRIATE INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the key lessons learned from NCC#2 is the need for the territory to equip itself with a space for creation and rehearsals on the one hand, and a centre for modern and contemporary art on the other. In response, Namur 2030 is committed (Q/44) to supporting the development of:

- Rive, creative centre, a genuine city dedicated to local artists.
- Tribune, modern and contemporary art centre.

In preparation for the Capital year, we will be taking over the Carmel (Jambes), an exceptional venue made available by the University of Namur, to host residencies for local and international artists as part of Rocket.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ARTISTIC CREATIVITY

Although Namur's territory has a wealth of infrastructure and distribution structures, creativity remains on the scarce side. There is a lack of artists and performers who are developing, settling down and establishing their practice in Namur on a long-term basis. This dearth can be explained by a shortage of suitable venues, professional tools and intermediary infrastructure, but also by the absence of structured support and genuine bridges to Europe and the international scene. It is on the basis of this observation that we are implementing several measures to strengthen local artistic creation.

01 — A quota of 20% of artists originating from the territory has been set, not as a strict limit but as an ambitious goal. This figure, which may seem modest, is actually quite demanding given the small number of professional artists currently residing in Namur. But we are confident that Namur's artists will be visible and present: we will highlight the work of visual artists, graffiti artists and photographers in particular in *Released Expressions*. Arts from the local scene will be showcased in *Mystery Meetings*, *Noctis* and *Radical Happiness*. Ten concerts out of the sixty proposed for *Music Side* will be performed by local artists. They will also be in *Folklore 2.0*, *Responsibility*, *Sow Food*. All these projects offer real visibility to local creativity in all its diversity.

02 — The *Little Connexits* are designed as places for shared creativity at the neighbourhood level (chapter 4). Several Namur-based companies have been developing community theatre for many years (Les Bonimenteurs, Victor B, Nicolas Buysse, Christelle Delbrouck, Philippe Vauchel, Théâtre Coeur de Terre, etc.), which are integrated into various neighbourhood committees; At the same time, a pool of artists is being created through a large call for applications, allowing all artists in the area to make themselves available to support the collectives as part of a large 'human toolbox'. They are our partners in developing meaningful artistic connections with the audience;

03 — More broadly, artists from Namur will be invited to take over the 50 partner venues for *Weaving the edges*, by responding to a specific call for projects.

04 — To strengthen the artistic fabric of Namur in a concrete way, we are creating the **Rocket initiative**, which will support ten local artists over a four-year development programme linked to the main themes of the programme. This project has attracted a lot of attention from other ECoCs (see Q13). *Rocket* has two objectives: first, to consolidate their practice, strengthen their roots and promote their European influence; second, to take action in the territory, preventing the loss of artistic talent. Each artist will receive a creative grant for the duration of the programme, access to a European network through exchange residencies, support from cultural organisations in Belgium and Namur, and mentoring through meetings with European artists. This scheme is made possible thanks to European support such as *Culture Moves Europe*, and is supported by coordinated mentoring with *On the Move*, particularly for methodological support and dissemination of knowledge. The expected results are multiple: programming of artists during Namur 2030, visibility via social media, documentaries or reports in partnership with RTBF (Q/40), and above all, the ability to continue their artistic activity on a European scale after 2030. These artists will in turn become mentors for the next generation. A review is planned for 2040 as part of NCC#3. It should be noted that the *Rocket* model is of interest to many ECoCs, as the issue of talent drain is frequently encountered.

SPECIFIC SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS

Namur 2030 will be paying particular attention to the emergence of a new generation of artists. Several projects in the programme, such as *Slow Opening*, *Mystery Meetings*, *Builtopia*, and *Music Side* have been designed as genuine springboards, by commissioning performances specifically from young local artists. This strong commitment to integrating emerging talent into the programme creates unprecedented opportunities for visibility, experimentation and professional development for a new generation of artists from Namur. With five years to go before the Capital of Culture year, it is still too early to draw up an exhaustive list of the artists and performers involved. However, numerous partnerships are already in place to ensure effective links with young creators: art schools, professional federations (such as the Court-Circuit non-profit organisation, which specialises in promoting young talent in contemporary music), and platforms supporting emerging artists such as Factory, Coq-Art and Looking-out.

Finally, a specific programme reinforces this dynamic: the **'Classe prépa'**, intended for secondary school leavers and young people up to the age of 26 who wish to pursue artistic studies. Led by the Théâtre et Centre Culturel de Namur and Namur 2030, it aims to promote greater social diversity within the drama schools of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (INSAS, IAD, ESACT, ART2, Conservatoire de Bruxelles) by preparing young people for the entrance exams to these schools. This programme provides additional support for local artistic development by offering a strategy to reduce inequalities in access to artistic professions.



03

European dimension

Q/11

EXPLAIN THE SCOPE AND QUALITY OF ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO:

11.1 PROMOTE EUROPE'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY, INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND GREATER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AMONG EUROPEAN CITIZENS;

11.2 HIGHLIGHT THE COMMON ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN CULTURES, HISTORY AND HERITAGE, AS WELL AS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND CURRENT EUROPEAN ISSUES;

The 'difffluences' mentioned in the previous pages extend far beyond our borders. Despite its shared founding values, the EU is currently experiencing numerous political, economic and social tensions that are undermining intercultural dialogue and accentuating divisions, particularly under the polarising influence of social media and extremism. In the light of these challenges, a cultural initiative such as ours, based on a long-term political vision and cultural rights, which places culture at the heart of solving our problems by rebuilding ties, spreading joy and restoring meaning, is poised to play a crucial role in promoting greater mutual understanding between European citizens (chap. 1).

As a result, most European regions, whether small, medium or large, could certainly draw inspiration from what we are trying to achieve in Namur, by fully embracing the priorities of the European Union. After all, these major challenges concern us all, at different levels.

- **The place of artists, creativity and artistic freedom** are priorities, a guarantee of the state of our democracy and the **viability of our cultures**. **Confluence can be an art form in its own right** on a European level.
- **Intercultural dialogue** is on the wane, trapped in a mindset of withdrawal, mistrust and even open hostility towards certain communities living within the European Union. In these circumstances, Confluence acting as a force for **convergence** becomes an artistic principle, as well as one of governance. In fact, Confluence can be a **method** that can be duplicated elsewhere.
- **Democracy** must defend its own model and even reaffirm its relevance facing racist, supremacist, extremist and separatist hostilities within its own ranks. This hostility also comes from outside, from certain major powers that are attacking the European model more or less openly. In this context, the EU once again becomes a **sound base and perspective to be defended**. Confluence needs to be a **force for resistance** on a European scale.
- Cultural operators are looking for the best ways to promote cultural rights and place culture at the heart of cities and in the lives of their inhabitants. Confluence is a powerful and new **experience** that needs to be shared.
- Major **digital** advances find themselves going head-to-head against the necessary **ecological transition** that has to be implemented, as well as against issues of **ethics and social cohesion**. Rather than deny these divergent issues, Europeans need to tackle them together, head-on. Confluence is a **responsibility** that concerns us all.
- Young people are challenging their elders about their responsibilities and questioning the European model, with a view to making it less unbalanced and more equitable. Confluence is also a celebration of us as Europeans, with all our **diversities** and shared **values**. It is a way of strengthening **mutual trust between generations**, while tightening the **links that bind young people with Europe**.

NAMUR 2030: A LABORATORY OF EUROPEAN CONFLUENCES

Because it responds to the challenges that we face universally, **Confluence can act as a laboratory for the whole of Europe**. Putting Europe, its culture and citizens at the heart of solving our problems may even be the only way of rebuilding bridges between individuals, communities and generations, indeed between all living things. We are exploring a number of different major challenges. Here are a few of them, distilled from the three artistic axes and main lines of our programme. They illustrate how Namur 2030 will contribute to promoting cultural diversity in Europe, along with intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, European heritage, European integration and current European topics of interest.

AXIS 1. TEMPORAL - PAST/FUTURE

Namur 2030 is revisiting our cultural heritage and becomes part of living memory, building bridges between tradition and innovation, folklore and digital technology, heritage and creativity.

The more Namur 2030 highlights its heritage, traditions and local cultures, the more European Namur 2030 becomes. By bringing together history, art history and European history with digital technology, Namur will be bringing its own unique perspective to the reinterpretation of European heritage and can serve as a source of inspiration in this area. A major exhibition such as *Intertwined* highlights universal highlights universal languages that enable us to share emotions and build meaning together, transcending the barriers of time.

Folklore 2.0 reflects and enhances cultural diversity as a source of wealth rather than division. It revives the universal languages (music, dance, rituals, stories) that enable us to share emotions and weave common narratives beyond linguistic and cultural boundaries. By bringing the popular traditions of our territory into dialogue with various European folk traditions and with the most contemporary digital experiments, this project offers a lively and innovative interpretation of Europe's intangible heritage. *Folklore 2.0*, is a Europe of roots and pixels, which celebrates heritage while also bringing transformation and innovation, enabling it to better connect the past, present and future.

AXIS 2. GEOGRAPHICAL - LOCAL/GLOBAL

Namur 2030 will celebrate local diversity while building a common European narrative, becoming a crossroads for Europe where artists and festivals from all over the continent can come together.

It is often said that Belgium is a little Europe because it concentrates within its borders the challenges of diversity between different linguistic communities that sometimes find it difficult to communicate with each other. With this in mind, our approach is to talk about European cultural diversity, first and foremost, based on the distance (and sometimes mutual misunderstanding) between Flanders and Wallonia. Through Namur-Namen, we experiment with intercultural dialogue, bringing together the realities of two regions that look at each other without one really knowing

the other very well (Q/06). This enables us to take the idea of learning to speak European at face value, paying particular attention to language learning. This will be the case in *Little Connexits* (chapter 4) and the whole of the *Fluencies* project, which explores and puts local dialects and contemporary European literature into perspective (Q/06). Celebrating this diversity through original projects provides artistic and pragmatic solutions to the issue of language barriers. All this contributes to a more shared narrative about Europe.

To underline even more the intercultural dialogue, our partnership with **Public Libraries 2030 Network** aims to facilitate exchanges with leading Flemish libraries and connect Namur's cultural scene to Public Libraries 2030's extensive European Network for collaborative projects and artistic residencies.

Then, with *Congo Dynamo* and its triptych, the dynamic is much the same, albeit far more tragic. Even today, the subject of colonialism remains extremely sensitive in our societies and largely unacknowledged, both on an individual level and also within our institutions. Once again, it is through Confluence that we are able to suggest non-dogmatic and non-definitive answers so that as many points of view as possible can be expressed (Q/06). *Responsibility* also speaks very well of it when proposing commissions for contemporary works as counterpart to, for example, a piece exhibited at MusAfrica or the statue of Leopold II, the King who made the Congo his personal property.

Then there's *BELGefête*, which aims to reinvent the process of acquiring nationality within countries of the EU with an inventive artistic offering (Q/06). Here, a queer artist of Russian origin has been given carte blanche to work with the municipal authorities. It is a powerful proposal that shows us the diversity of what it means to be Belgian or European today. *Polyphonia Mundi* and *New songbook* also move in this axis, bringing together the voices of Europe and Ukraine in a single chorus/heart, exposing us through song to the shared aspects of our cultures.

True stories also brings Eastern Europe, and Ukraine in particular, closer to us through the best of European investigative journalism and storytelling. The aim is to establish this festival as 'the' major French-speaking Belgian event for journalism, alongside *Voice* in Zagreb and the International Journalism Festival in Perugia, Italy. This theme is dear to the European Union, which celebrates essential journalistic freedom through to the EU, one that celebrates essential journalistic freedom through various Awards (Louise Weiss, Daphne Caruana Galizia). Combining these projects, we touch on a number of current issues and promote mutual understanding but even more so, we celebrate Europe and educate ourselves about freedom.

Sambre 2030 invites European artists to participate in the creation of a new narrative based around the river Sambre, highlighting the richness of Europe's river heritage and contributing to raising awareness of environmental issues. In doing so, Namur opens the door to outside influences to enrich its own identity and contribute to Europe's overall cultural wealth.

AXIS 3. SOCIOLOGICAL - TENSIONS/ATTENTIONS

Namur 2030 intends to create the conditions for culture to be made 'with' rather than 'for', giving a voice to minorities and promoting citizen participation. Namur is committed to fighting inequality and discrimination. To promote social inclusion, the city takes inspiration from best practices and European values in a continuous search for solutions to offer people deprived of access to culture, whether due to their geographical, social or economic situation.

Namur offers and shares an alternative narrative to separatists of all kinds: one of coexistence between differences, in a spirit of dialogue and interconnection, based on shared European values (dignity, equality, human rights). Our project is not a bubble or a cloche that we want to place over the city for a year: it responds to a desire for change shared by citizens. For lasting change and for the better.

In Europe, it is commonly agreed that accessibility and inclusivity are major issues, but we are still struggling to make our cities and cultural venues truly inclusive and accessible. *Action with film*, *Radical Happiness* with dance, and, of course, *Weaving the edges* are all projects that tackle this challenge head-on as long-term initiatives involving audiences that are among the most culturally isolated in our region.

The current economic crisis, which is being experienced in different ways across Europe, but is nonetheless being felt everywhere, poses a real challenge to these objectives. It is clear that there is growing insecurity in all cities and regions. In Namur, there has been an 8% increase in homelessness, which is higher than anywhere else in Wallonia. Namur 2030 will respond to this by taking an artistic approach to cultural inclusion, while also attempting to advance cultural rights. By relocating cultural life outside the city centre, *Confluence Hubs* and the *Little Connexits* (chapter 4) provide greater access to cultural activities. They connect rural areas to the urban centre and encourage participation across the entire Namur region through a genuine network, a kind of screening process, street by street and neighbourhood by neighbourhood, to ensure that no one is left out.

Weaving the edges promotes cultural inclusion by highlighting multiple narratives, hybrid art forms and cultural confluences, giving a voice to the invisible. For this particular project, we carried out a detailed census to ensure that no one was overlooked. This is an innovative approach to social inclusion, emphasising citizen participation and highlighting differences. At the same time it allows us to have an insight into the diversity of European responses to the issue of social inclusion, anchoring the project in an international dynamic.

To go even further, we are strengthening our inclusive approach to cultural rights by collaborating with the **Human Rights Cities Network**. Their expertise will be instrumental in embedding a human-rights based approach within Namur's cultural initiatives. Our partnership will focus on three key areas : providing advisory capacity to our team for infusing a human rights-led approach across our entire programme; offering technical expertise for specific projects like *Little Connexits* and major public events; and granting access to

a valuable network of collaborative cities. In return, Namur 2030 is committed to sharing our learnings and serving as a model for other cities, creating a lasting legacy.

PLENTY OF ROOM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Namur 2030 makes lots of room for young people, especially in terms of its European dimension. The special way that children (with *Playground* or *Alternative Routes*) and young people (with *Builtopia* or *Music Side*) look at the world enables us to tackle highly topical issues and build for tomorrow. Young people in Namur will be the ones who benefit most from their city as the ECoC.

Some concrete examples of projects and initiatives encouraging the participation of young people:

- *Builtopia* brings together young people from across Europe around a common project, promoting cultural exchange, tolerance and openness. It is a space for dialogue and creativity for young Europeans, enabling them to express themselves and build a better future together. It is a great example of promoting active citizenship and democratic participation with the youth.
- *Little Connexits* invites European citizens of all ages to live, eat and sleep at Namur's inhabitants, promoting intercultural exchanges and the discovery of local heritage. It is an authentic cultural immersion experience, allowing young visitors to discover the richness of Namur's heritage and meet the locals. It has been conceived also as a means of introduction to different European cultures and of reflexion on sustainable tourism amongst young people.
- The *Rocket* project invites young artists from Namur to other ECoCs to boost their creativity and talent and raise their visibility on an international scale. Rocket creates mobility opportunities for young artists who will later contribute to Europe's cultural wealth.

In addition to all projects proposed before and during the year of ECoC we also wish to make the most of the legacy of these initiatives.

For example, *Now it's our turn!* to send a delegation of young people from Namur to the European Youth Event (EYE) in Strasbourg in 2031 to share their ECoC experience with other youngsters from all over Europe. Doing so, we aim to inspire other cities and young European citizens to be the actors of their future. This is a great opportunity for the youth to participate in European democratic life. The visit in Strasbourg will be the culmination of one cycle (ECoC year) and the starting point of another as we will also encourage them to take the lead on setting up a candidacy to become European Youth Capital after 2030 which is a part of an important legacy of Namur 2030. This initiative is a model for mobilising young people to build a more sustainable and inclusive European future.

These two last examples are great opportunities for the young people from Namur to bring Europe closer to its citizens but also to act as an example for all European youth.

BRINGING RESONANCE TO DIGITAL ARTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Finally, discussing European priorities and current affairs also means discussing sustainability and the future of the planet. So, for Namur 2030, this also involves talking about *F(r)ictions* (Q/06), the major transversal artistic project at Namur 2030, which focuses on digital arts and environmental responsibility. Our attempts to bring sustainability and digital technology together are not only limited to the artistic sphere, thereby we will be formally establishing the **Responsible Digital Laboratory** in autumn 2025. This digital innovation laboratory is designed to build on the ECoC's legacy and capitalise on the potential synergy between Namur as a thriving hub of digital creativity and Namur's commitment to ambitious ecological transition objectives. This project is part of:

- **An ecosystem of local stakeholders**, including cultural operators such as KIKK and economic operators such as Spade, with their *Digital Change with Ethics*. For future editions, Namur 2030 will be a partner of the event and will be putting young people and Europe in the spotlight to co-create a future where digital technology and sustainability converge (Q11.4).
- **An international ecosystem committed to responsible digital technology** (HACNUM, Augures Lab, Collectif arts écologie transition, TMN Lab, ZKM, Elektra, Ars Electronica, WXO, Chroniques, the Scopitone Festival, the Erasmus+ network, the partners of the Co-Vision programme and STARTS Aquamotion)
- **Monitoring the best cross-disciplinary studies in this field**, namely those conducted by ARCEP and ADEME on digital emissions and the CEPiR project (Case Study for Responsible Immersive Technology).
- **A willingness on the part of local and regional authorities to push these issues forward**. On a provincial level, *Namur Green City Lab*, in collaboration with the University of Namur, is already presenting a series of projects focused on digital and ecological transitions. These concerns are reflected in the *Digital Wallonia* programme on energy management, sustainable mobility, reducing carbon footprints and natural resource consumption. These concerns are shared by most European countries. However, what seems less clear is how artists are addressing this issue in order to change the dominant representations of digital technology. We believe that breaking away from an intangible image of technology is a major challenge in supporting a responsible digital transition.
- **EU values**: sustainability and protection of citizens' rights, support for digital democracy and digital responsibility.
- **Critical reflection on technologies**, which need to be questioned, reappropriated and reinvented not only by artists, but also by all those who care about fundamental freedoms and social justice. Our goal is to better understand the challenges of digital justice in order to make digital technology more just, inclusive and equitable.
- **Promoting existing initiatives** such as the CooProg

platform, which facilitates low-carbon art tours. It encourages the creation of similar laboratories in other European cities to pool efforts to promote ethical digital technology.

- **Seeking European funding and technological and academic partnerships** with the support of Awex, WBI, the wake! network of Digital Wallonia, the TWIST Cluster and all those mentioned in Q/21.

In October 2025, Namur 2030 will take advantage of the visit of the UNESCO Creative Cities cluster during the KIKK Festival to make a strong statement: the launch of the first call for residences for *F(r)ictions* and the *Responsible Digital Laboratory*, in the presence of all the European Capitals of Culture, who will be invited for the occasion. As a city member of the UNESCO Media Arts network, Namur is ideally positioned to play several key roles in Europe's digital transition:

- **By becoming a responsible digital hub by 2030**, by strengthening synergies with technology companies, academic institutions and cultural actors, including in Southern and Eastern Europe. Namur is able to act as a facilitator of cross-industry and private public collaborations on a European scale.
- **By playing a major teaching role for highlighting the materiality of digital and its carbon footprint**. Art is promoted as a critical and creative lever by inviting artists such as Metahaven, Liu Chang, Sophia Al-Maria, New Mineral Collective and Ralf Baeker, who are already proposing powerful approaches to understanding, subverting and reinventing digital environments.
- **By critically addressing the impacts of artificial intelligence on our societies**, our trades and professions, our environment and our cultures. According to the Eurobarometer, 75% of Europeans are concerned about AI and the influence it is having on artistic creativity. Contrary to prevailing practices, we support a vision that is ethical, aesthetic and participatory for AI. With *F(r)ictions*, we support the creation of locally rooted projects, such as in *Sambre 2030*, where the memories of local resident feed creative AI. Figures such as Holly Herndon or Grégory Chatonsky embody this new generation of artists working with data and algorithms to create new narrative forms.
- **By supporting the emergence of ethical digital public policies within the legislative context of the countries in the European Union**. By blending art, innovation, sustainability and fundamental rights, Namur is committed to promoting digital technology that is fairer, more equitable and more democratic.

Through this structural programme, Namur 2030 aims to make **responsible digital technology one of the major legacies of its year as Capital**. This Responsible Digital Laboratory is not just a simple local project, but a **cross-industry and international protocol for collaboration**, designed to spread, inspire and engage other European cities. As such, it formalises Confluence as a new path for **digital technology: a digital world that is embodied, critical, shared — and deeply European**.

11.3 EXPLAIN THE SCOPE AND QUALITY OF ACTIVITIES AIMED AT PROMOTING EUROPEAN ARTISTS, COLLABORATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND CITIES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS.

To give Namur the stature of a cultural city that has weight on a European scale and to ensure an innovative approach to our projects, we created a series of international meetings throughout the preparation period. With artists and operators whose excellence has enabled us to further develop many of our projects. The aim has been to strengthen the bridges that lead to our region and in doing so, to prepare for the post-2030 period by consolidating a sustainable and open cultural strategy. All while supporting the creativity and artistic freedom of all creators.

To achieve this we first needed to **consolidate the foundations**. Each collaboration has been designed as a genuine convergence, accompanied by a methodology and short-term and long-term objectives. During this bid phase, Namur 2030 has structured its European and international relations strategy by drawing on two complementary areas of expertise: one firmly rooted in the local cultural partnerships to be promoted, and the other focused on the European opportunities to be seized. This way of working ensures consistency with the city's DNA, our programming and our partners' priorities. Everything takes longer because it's not just a matter of exporting or importing works, but of creating them together, within a shared framework. The establishment of our **Responsible Digital Laboratory** also demonstrates the way we are working meticulously to ensure that we do not duplicate efforts with existing initiatives in the territory, but rather fill a gap at the international level and involve as many partners as possible.

Various commitments have been made in terms of artists and performers: **40% of the artistic programme for Namur 2030 will be international and mainly European**. It is based on: direct curation; specific international calls for projects, issued and supported by leading European partners; and participatory processes involving international artists. This latter process in particular requires very local players to come together with very international ones, and vice versa. Confluence at its best, in other words. For example, we will be supporting local festivals in their efforts to become international (e.g. *Intime festival* and *True stories*, establishing bridges particularly with Southern and Eastern Europe). Our strong partnership with EUNIC Brussels (network of 28 cultural institutions and embassies of EU Member States and associated European countries) is another example

of building a network of peer-to-peer learning and best practice exchange emphasizing the value of creativity to celebrate and bridge differences at European scale.

The collective formed by Ludomir Franczak and Marcin Dymiter from Lublin invites us to rethink the way we look at our rivers and the collective memory they carry through a work created in situ for *Sambre 2030*. The Cooking Section collective, which stands out for its socially engaged artistic practices, will be working with the inhabitants of Namur to imagine new horizons capable of feeding people and raise awareness of climate realities.

We are aiming to establish our international projects in our region at an early stage and by doing so to ensure that several targeted actions are embraced and have a long-term impact. The aim is to ensure sustainability beyond 2030. That is why, in all visual arts projects, agreements are being made to enable the works to continue to circulate. Starting with those from *F(r)ictions* or *Folklore 2.0*, which have been designed from the outset to be mobile, adaptable and reusable elsewhere. In all our performing arts projects, we are working to promote artists and shows on an international footing.

Once again, it is the strength of our networks and our legitimacy within them that enable us to give real visibility to artistic proposals conceived in Namur by artists of all disciplines and nationalities. Partnerships are also emerging in this axis with future ECoCs, to pass on the baton, to share lessons learned and co-write stories with multiple voices. We are doing everything we can to ensure that the European adventure continues. And we are doing this by bringing our local operators to the table for international curation and, more broadly, for our international relations strategy.

11.4 EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL CITIES, CULTURAL OPERATORS AND ARTISTS WITH WHICH/WHOM COOPERATION IS PLANNED AND SPECIFY THE TYPE OF EXCHANGES INVOLVED. PARTNERSHIPS THAT THE CITY HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED OR PLANS TO ESTABLISH.

As shown by the examples, Namur 2030 places European and international cooperation at the heart of its strategy, not as a separate focus but as a cross-cutting ambition: to forge connections across borders, disciplines and

cultures with concrete and lasting links between cities, artists and organisations. The following table summarises many of our active partnerships and those currently being developed.

NAMUR 2030 PROJECTS	NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS AND PARTNERS (CITIES, OPERATORS)	ARTISTS, CURATORS, COLLECTIVES
AXIS 1. TEMPORAL - PAST/FUTURE		
Folklore 2.0	Kiruna (SE), JU Zahumlje (ME), Elektra (CA), Oulu (FI), Ars Electronica (AT), Tamburica Fest (RS), Tartu (EE), Etnovyr Folklore Festival (UA), Afrikikk (BE), UNESCO Media Arts Cities, Benelux Grant for Cross-Border Cooperation Involvement of the Greater Region.	Marie du Chastel (BE), Numen/For Use (HR/AT), Anouk Kruithof (NL), Jake Elwes (GB), Véronique Béland (CA/FR)
Sow Food	Refoodges - Brussels (BE), Laboratory for the Future of Food (SI), France Bevk Public Library (SI), Kiruna (SE), Slow Food Festival (PL), Oulu 2026 (FI), Trenčín (SK), Faro (PT), Larnaka (CY), Evora (PT), le théâtre à l'envers (FR), Iltopie (FR), Ågenskalna Tigrus (LT), Ars Electronica (AT), Slow Food International Network, Climavore.	Giovanna Massoni (BE/IT), Saša Vidmar (SI), Ana Kosič (SI), Irena Škvarč (SI), Pantopicon(BE), Chloé Rutzerveld (NL), Atelier Luma (FR), Kosuke Araki (JP), Jinhyun Jeon (JP), Eugenia Morpurgo (IT), Jasper Udink ten Cate (NL), Arabeschi di Latte (IT/GB), Imanol Galdos (ES), Giulia Soldati (IT), Sam Bompas (UK), Iltopie (FR), Rara Woulib (FR), Cooking section(UK), Danaterre (FR), Coal (FR), Jeroen Meus - Leuven (BE)
True stories	Lviv Media Forum (UA), Docville (BE), The Narrative Laundry Lab (PL), PiNA (SI), Lemosos International Documentary Festival (CY), SHORTZ Film Festival (RS), Visa pour l'image à Perpignan (FR), Festival international de journalisme de Couthures (FR), Live Magazine (FR), Fédération Internationale des Journalistes (UE), Reporters Sans Frontières (UE), Cartooning for Peace (UE), Forbidden Stories (UE), Kometa (FR), Art of Survival documentary short film (ES), Millenium Festival (BE), International Journalism Festival (IT), Voices à Zagreb (CR), The Power of Storytelling (RO), European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), Prenons la Une (FR).	Oksana Leuta (UK), Tatiana Frolova (UK), Anastassia Volkova (UK), Vladimir Kara-Mourza (SU), Chris Baldwin (BG)
Builtopia	Larnaka BioDesign Festiva (CY), Cyprus University of Technology (CY), Urban Culture Festival(ME), FH Joanneum (AU), Politecnico di Milano (IT), Kiruna (SE), ConstructLab (Transnational Network), Compagnons de France (FR), EUNIC Brussels cluster, Corps européen de solidarité. EAAE, Erasmus + Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP)	Raumlabor (DE), Yes We Camp(FR), Liquiid (BE-FR)
Released Expressions		Qart (XK), Oripeau (FR), Claire Calogirou (FR), Appelle-moi poésie (Fr), Maralinké (ML)
Bestiary	Fédération des Parcs naturels de Wallonie (BE), le réseau Natura 2000 (BE), le collectif Disnovation (programme NEST)	Juliette Bibasse (BE), Joanie Lemerrier (BE), Camille Scherrer (FR-CH), Suzanne Husky (FR-US), Aki Inomata (JP), Rimini Protokoll (DE), Ryoichi Kurokawa (JP)
AXIS 2. GEOGRAPHICAL - LOCAL/GLOBAL		
Sambre 2030	Internationale des Rivières et des Fleuves, Parlement de Loire (FR)	Fabien Vehlmann (FR), Marine Yzquierdo (FR), Camille de Toledo (FR), Ludomir Franczak et Marcin Dymiter - Lublin (PL)
Music side	Clubcircuit network, Wallonie-Bruxelles Musiques (WBM) (Be), Vi.BE (Belgium Booms). Live DMA (EU), Creative Europe (EU), Culture Crew des Jeunesses Musicales Internationales.	FEDELIMA (FR), le Collectif Culture Bar-Bars (FR), ACCES (ES), ASACC (ES), Kultura Live (ES), Dansk Live DK), KeepOn Live (IT), LiveKomm (DE), Norwegian Live (NO), PETZI (CH), Svensk Live (SE), la VNPF (NL), LiveFIN (FI), Music Estonia Live (EE), NAKTA (LT), LPINVA (LV), Circuito (PT) et Salon IKS (TR).
Dolce Vita	PECA (Parcours d'Éducation Culturelle et Artistique – Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Oerol Festival (NL), IN SITU Network (EU), Performing Landscape (EU). Extension Sauvage (FR), Academy and Incubator of Slow Cultural Tourism (CZ), Down by the river - Zveza Mink Tolmin (SI), Drift Project - Belfast (UK), ICA-WB, Derrière le Hublot (FR), Architect Arks - Kiruna (SE), Lemosos (CY), U19 create your world - AEC (AT)	
Grand Puzzle Parade		Zinneke asbl-vzw (BE), Iltopie (FR), Le Voyage à Nantes (FR), La Bosch Parade (NL)
Namur-Namen	VierNulVier, Ghent (BE), De Grote Post, Ostend (BE) Poezie Centrum, Ghent (BE); Vonk&Zonen, Antwerp (BE); Rob tv, Uitwijken, Bruges (BE); Event Change and Pulse Transitionenetwork.	

Focus Bicentenaire	Africalia (Bruxelles), Musée de Tervuren (Bruxelles), Kin Dada (RDC), Texaf Bliembo (RDC), Kin Dada (RDC), Texaf Bliembo (RDC), Yolé Africa Goma (RDC), Festival Amani (RDC), CCAC de Kinshasa (RDC), Centre culturel Wallonie-Bruxelles à Kinshasa (RDC), Kiamvu-Le Pont (RDC), CGLU, the cultuurculture platform (FWB).	Pitcho Womba Konga (BE), Bwanga Pilipili (BE)
Fluencies	Write Local Play Global (INT), Centre des Immigrés Namur-Luxembourg (CINL) University of Atypical Artist, Belfast (GB), European House of Languages by EUNIC Brussels Cluster: Czech Centre Brussels, Alliance Française de Bruxelles-Europe, Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux, Goethe-Institut, Liszt Institute, Istituto Italiano, The Embassy of Luxembourg, Polish Institute Brussels, Camões - Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua, Romanian Cultural Institute, Instituto Cervantes, Ebekpare Basque Institute, Institut Yunus Emre.	
AXIS 3. SOCIOLOGICAL - TENSIONS/ATTENTIONS		
Weaving The Edges	3 bis F (FR), University of Atypical (UK), The City of Weaves (PL), Ability Campus & DIS Festival (CY), Koullou Makka collective (CY), Nikšić (ME), Lublin(PL), Ars Electronica (AT), Liepāja (LV), ASC - Art, Care, and Civic Engagement network, CARE: Culture for Mental Health (CAE), Mentalnet.eu	Tamaya Sapey-Triomphe (CL - FR), Olivier Fredj (GB- FR), NoSauveraignauthors (BE), Christophe Vanderawen (Art-T) (FR-BE), Helen Hall (UK)
Noctis	Paradise Garage (US), Berghain (DE), Lumo Art & Tech Festival (FI), Solstice Festival (FI), Queer waves film festival, Lemesos (CY), Kiruna (SE), the Photography Museum - Charleroi (BE), CVB - Brussels (BE), RTBF (BE), Coal (FR)	
Responsibility	Bien Urbain Festival (FR), Genre et Ville (FR), The Protocol of the New Patrons (BE), vie féminine Network	Sophie Calle (FR), Laura Nsengiyumva, Magda Sayeg (US), Elisabeth Lebovici (FR), Camille Morineau (FR), Xabier Arakistain (ES), Nathalie Bondil (FR-CA), Bénédicte Ramade (CA), Manuel Borja-Villel (ES), Toma Muteba Luntumbue (CG)
That's it!	Larnaka (CY), Zveza Mink Tolmin (SI), Nikšić (ME), The Brontë Parsonage Museum (UK), Kiruna (SE)	Bojana Peković (RS)
Intimacies	Bye Bye Binary, Musée de la photographie de Charleroi (BE), Fotomuseum Antwerpen (BE), Nederlands Fotomuseum of Rotterdam (NL), ULiège (BE), University of Antwerp (BE), Iselp (BE), Musées royaux (BE); Collectif Aspekt (BE), UNIA des Beaux Arts de Belgique (BE)	Hélène Giannecchini (FR)
Radical Happines	Biennale de la Danse de Lyon (FR), Centre national de la Danse (FR)	Daily tous les jours – Mouna Andraos & Melissa Mongiat (CA).
Playground	Lublin (PL), Larnaka (CY), Evora (PT)	Julien Fournet (FR)
In unison	The Reine Elisabeth Contest (BE), European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the “Don Alfio Conti” choir - Adrano (IT), the “Prevosto Pietro Branchina” choir (IT), Institute for tourism, culture, youth and sport Brda (SI), Epilogi Cultural Movement (CY), Liepāja (LV), Tartu (EE), Clari Cantus (CZ), Evora(PT), Sami joijking (SE), Choir Homin (UA) ECA - European Choral Association	Lievine Hubert (BE)
Responsible Digital Laboratory & F(r)ictions	KIKK, TRAKK, UNamur, HEAJ, Superbe, TWIST media cluster, PaDel (UCLouvain), Saloon fr, Elektra (CA), Ars Electronica, Linz (AT), Saloon fr, ZKM (DE), PaDel, HACNUM — National network of hybrid arts and cultures (FR), AFRIKIKK (BE), Chroniques (FR), WXO — World Experience Organisation, UNESCO Creative Cities of Media Arts Network, Wake! by Digital Wallonia.	

The **exchanges planned take several practical forms**: cross-cultural or twinned residencies and performances (*Immersion*, *Responsibility*, *Sow Food*), co-creation of monumental or performance works in public spaces (*Released Expressions*, *We won't run(a)way!*, *Bestiary*), collaborative exhibitions and shared curation (*Folklore 2.0*, *Sow Food*), mixed teams, whether for artistic banquets and performance tables with local chefs and

European artists or our atypical crew (*Sow Food*, *Weaving the edges*), pan-European participatory projects with young artists, schools, citizens (*Slow Opening*, *Dolce Vita*, *Builtopia*), exchanges of knowledge and best practices through European networks or online meetings (table-talk *Sow Food*, *Weaving the edges*, the *Culture Next* theme-related group), collective creations between ECoCs, cultural and artistic exchanges (The *climate*

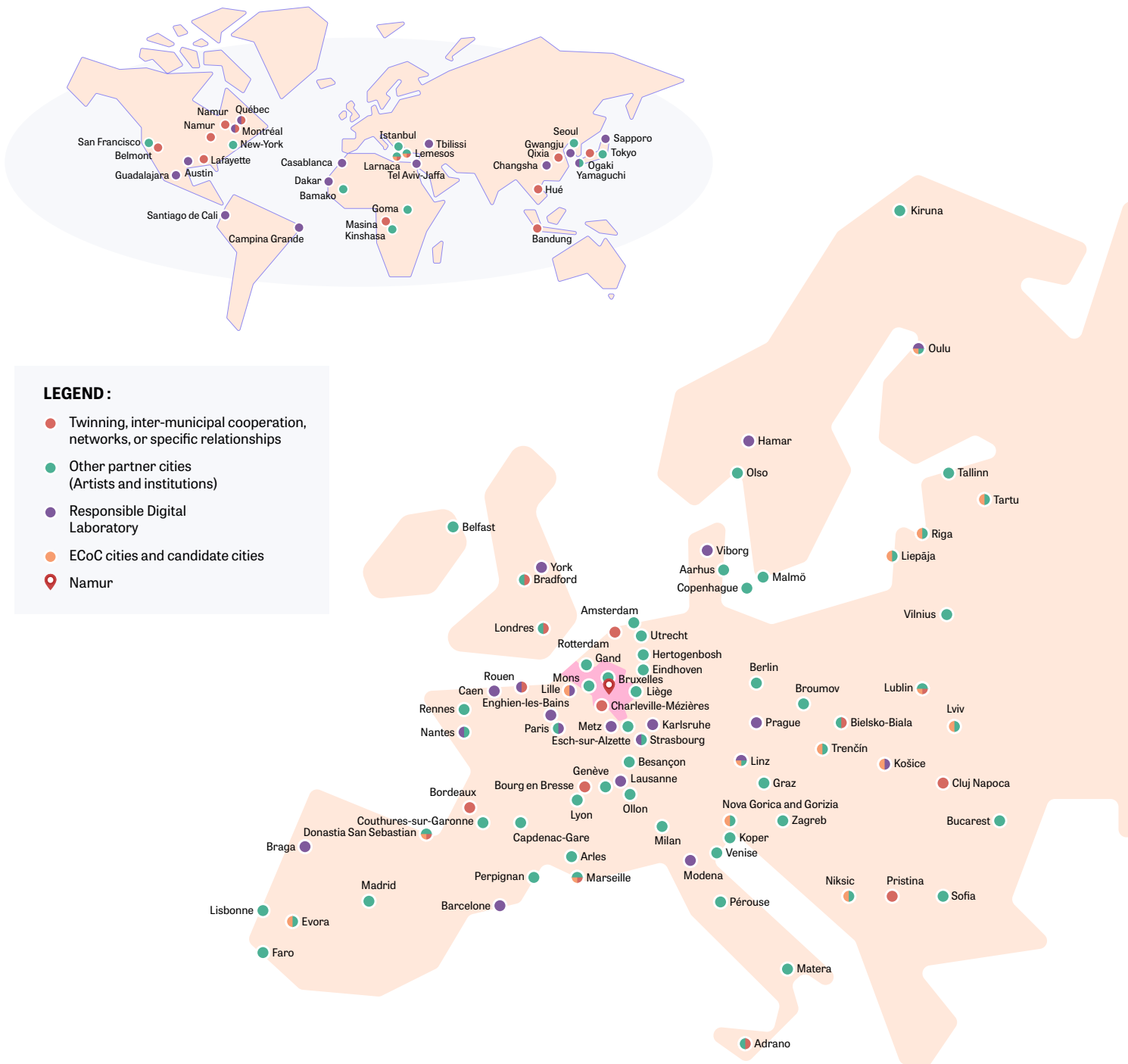
in us), long-term cooperation between cultural organisations in Namur and their counterparts in the DRC (*Congo Dynamo*), sharing approaches to sensitive issues with partner cities and universities on the governance of public space (*Responsibility*).

To promote these transnational partnerships, the approach taken has been to work with the Namur city network, partner cities, twin cities, the University network and academic and business communities, with the Faculty of Agro biotech in Gembloux (University of Liège).

We have also explored networks that could be relevant either for our projects or to help our cultural institutions (capacity building in terms of cultural funds and partnerships): On the Move, IETM (International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts), Trans Europe Halles Network (SE), In SITU for emerging artists in public spaces, ASC (Art, Care, Civic engagement network), Culture Next for ECoCs, the EUNIC

network (European Union National Institutes for Culture), Public Libraries 2030, Human Rights Cities Network, Culture Action Europe (CAE), European Youth Forum and the Erasmus+ network for young people.

Let's mention cross-border, international and European institutions: Wallonie Bruxelles International, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, La Grande Région for *Folklore* projects (five regions, four countries, three languages), the Cultural Outreach Unit of the European Parliament, the House of European History. To this, we can add the AIMF (Association of French-speaking Mayors), Vertech City and UNESCO Creative Cities of Media Arts. These are all opportunities to showcase our projects internationally and help create new connections. We have also forged new links during the following events: SXSW 2025 London, 'Artists & curators meeting' at the KIKK Festival 2024, Casa Valonia 2025, SATE 2025, Bradford 2025, UK City of Culture, etc.



Namur 2030 aims to make the Namur territory a genuine European crossover point for culture. To achieve this, the project is able to draw on

- its existing strengths, in particular its heritage sites, its digital ecosystem and the interactions it fosters between the two (Q/08);
- its political strategy, as embodied in successive NCC plans and the consolidation already achieved thanks to the application, particularly in terms of territorial, intersectoral and international cooperation (Q/02);
- its strategy for strengthening the capabilities of its artists and cultural operators (Q/09);
- the relevance of its artistic vision (Q/05), the evocative

power of its 'Confluences' concept (Q/38) and its multichannel, multi-audience communication strategy (Q/39).

Building on this solid foundation, with a view to 2030 and with a strong focus on legacy, Namur 2030 is rolling out a strategy to attract a wide European and international audience based on four fundamental pillars:

- artistic projects of international size and scope,
- a strategy for tourists supported by the Walloon Region,
- specific communication tools,
- active cultural diplomacy.

1. ARTISTIC PROJECTS OF INTERNATIONAL SIZE AND SCOPE

These engaging artistic proposals are among the projects we are prioritising in our communications, both nationally (Q/39) and internationally.

Exhibitions never seen before on an international scale, which, through the Confluence of different timeframes, world views and world affiliations, will create unique artistic experiences.

- *Responsibility*: an innovative experience that takes visitors on a journey between major museums and the streets of the city, an open-air museum where they can discover contemporary works created as a counterpoint to historical works.
- *Folklore 2.0*: brings together the latest experiments in digital art with more traditional elements, like its folklore, songs and festivals, in a fun and thoughtful way.
- *Released Expressions* will make the walls of one of Europe's largest citadels resonate with the best of graffiti artists, a discipline that is attracting an increasingly wider audience.
- *Dolce Vita*: a trail combining land art, surprise performances and unusual shelters in beautiful, unspoilt natural surroundings.
- *Intimacies*, the queer exhibition that will appeal to a wide audience looking for a sensitive exhibition in a sublime setting.
- *Bestiary*: through the curators' personalities and their European connections at the point where environmental activism and the most innovative research in carbon neutral digital arts meet, this project promises to be a unique immersive adventure, especially at night.
- *Landscape World*: a more traditional exhibition of visual arts, but one that will bring together enough big names in painting to attract the interest of visitors looking for major exhibitions in cities they have never visited before (Courbet, Rousseau, Monet, Van Gogh, Pissarro, Rops, Patin, etc.)

Major celebrations – unforgettable, of course.

- *Slow Opening* aims to bring together 100 000 people in the streets of Namur with a highly original and inclusive offering.
- *We won't run(a)way!* brings together Europe's most original folk, queer and musical groups on a huge catwalk for a unique and gender-fluid celebration of the continent's festive diversity.
- *Radical Happiness* revisits protest demonstrations in the spirit and with the support of major European events such as the Opening Festival of the Lyon Biennale.
- *Grand puzzle parade* brings together a surreal armada of unidentified floating objects. Never before seen in Belgium.
- *Music Side* attracts young and not-so-young audiences looking for festivals in unusual venues that bring together musical artists from many different genres of contemporary alternative music and from many countries, including Southern and Eastern Europe.

Laboratory of Confluences projects, which make Namur a real testing ground for artistic experimentation and attract programmers and cultural managers, as well as the general public who are interested in culture and looking for something new. Many of these proposals are especially interesting because of the collective design methods they employ, bringing together a wide range of local and international actors.

- *F(ri)ctions* proposes showcasing previously unseen digital works, some of which are created in situations where heritage and innovation came together in powerful encounters.
- *Builtopia* brings together young Europeans eager to build and celebrate together in a bold, urban setting.
- *The climate in us* proposes a unique dialogue between environmental activists, museums and all cultural and community stakeholders on a crucial

issue that needs to be addressed.

- *Action* offers a unique participatory film experience on a scale never seen before, in which everyone can participate.
- *Little Connexits* attempt on a large scale to offer every citizen a cultural venue where they can feel at home.

Unique offerings for families throughout the summer that are much more than just fun to be involved in. Because they also question society's relationship with children, with other humans in general and with all living things.

- *Playground* enables families to get together in the heart of the city, in a huge space designed especially for them and, as an added bonus, designed by children themselves.
- *Dolce Vita* through varied and fun itineraries, punctuated by artistic experiences from all disciplines, to be enjoyed alongside the extensive tourist attractions

of the Meuse and Sambre valleys (water sports, camping, cycling, animal parks, etc.).

- And, throughout the year, a range of museum and performing arts events that give pride of place to inclusive initiatives designed by and for children from the age of 0 upwards (chapter 4).

The region's major festivals will take on an even more international dimension in 2030: *KIKK* (digital art), *Namur en Mai* (fairground arts), *FIFF* (film), *Folknam* and les «Fêtes de Wallonie» (traditions), the *Festival International Nature Namur* (photos), the *Festival de l'Été Mosan* and the *Dinant Jazz Festival* (music), the *Passion Robinson festival* (lightweight housing and outdoor living), *Les Solidarités* and *Esperanzah!* (contemporary music) and *Intime* (literature) and *Namur is a Joke / Festival International du Rire de Rochefort* (humour), for those already supported.

2. A STRATEGY FOR TOURISTS SUPPORTED BY THE WALLOON REGION

To arouse the interest the interest of a wide European and international audience, our strategy is based on this high-impact content, strong coordination between all cultural and tourism stakeholders in the region, partnerships with major Belgian cities and cross-cutting strategic support from VISITWallonia, the organisation responsible for promoting tourism in Wallonia, in Belgium and abroad.

MESSAGES

Together with the region's five Tourist Offices, we are working to position Namur as a must-visit cultural destination, in particular by highlighting the confluence of heritage and digital arts. But we are also positioning ourselves as an **innovative and resilient laboratory for tourism**, on the scale of a medium sized town. Our aim is to achieve a change in the **long-term perception of Namur internationally**. *Dolce Vita* is the showcase project for this approach and is designed to move away from from the clichés of the conventional city trip and over-tourism, summarising the overall approach by the expression *slow tourism*. Our storytelling will highlight the distinctive strengths of Namur 2030:

- unique artistic, digital, festive and family experiences,
- sports and outdoor activities in a well-preserved natural setting,
- all **less than an hour by train from Brussels**.

Our approach also brings the **attractiveness of other touristic towns and cities** in Belgium into play, albeit without entering into direct competition. In practical terms, this means the introduction of combined tickets and tour options between two or even three key cities, such as Bruges, Brussels and Ghent, thanks to cooperation between VISITWallonia, Visit.Brussels and VISITFLANDERS.

AUDIENCES

Outside Belgium, Namur 2030 will be primarily targeting visitors from neighbouring countries (80% of our international audience), while developing specific initiatives to attract a wider European and international audience (10% for the rest of the EU and 10% for the rest of the world).

For **neighbouring countries**, Namur 2030 will focus primarily on the four neighbouring countries (the Greater Region) and their major population centres (Lille, Reims and Metz in France; Luxembourg and Esch in the Grand Duchy; Aachen, Cologne, Düsseldorf and Bonn in Germany; and Maastricht, Eindhoven and Rotterdam in the Netherlands). Namur 2030 will focus its communication on the ease on the ease of travel to Namur by train and car. Its primary target is, of course, the capital cities of Paris and Amsterdam, which are easily accessible to and from Namur thanks to the current rail connections. The increasing number of services, particularly direct and night trains, will expand our target market to Marseille, Nantes, Berlin, Munich and Salzburg.

For **the rest of the EU and internationally**, Namur will make the most of an expanding rail service, including the Eurostar between London and Brussels, of course, but also the Vienna-Brussels and Venice-Brussels routes. Namur 2030 will also benefit from increased visibility abroad, with enhanced affinity-based communication in key international markets: Spain, Italy, Canada, Japan, South Korea, China, India, Brazil and the United States. This expanded audience will be reached by VISITWallonia's overseas promotion offices.

We are also developing a specific strategy for diplomats, as well as foreign workers in the European institutions and their partners based in the capital of Europe.

3. SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION TOOLS

We are constantly monitoring and updating our analysis of the cultural preferences, interests and travel habits of the target groups in order to tailor the promotion of the programme as closely as to their needs as we approach 2030. That said, two categories of foreign audiences have already been established: general tourists (i.e. the public at large) and culture lovers.

With the Responsible Digital Laboratory as a framework, Namur 2030 will be implementing the following measures to reach these audiences:

- **multi-language communication** taking advantage of developments in translation tools, which will enable increasingly better targeted accessibility;
- respect for **cultural sensibilities** by avoiding stereotypes and promoting cultural diversity;
- a **digital strategy** with transnational scope focused on the flagship artistic projects presented above, as well as on slow tourism;
- **influence marketing**: we will be inviting influencers from other ECoCs and partner cities to discover Namur and become ‘confluencers’;
- **gamification / membership tools** (such as a digital work that evolves according to touch or presence,

for example) so that people can talk about their time in Namur and promote it to other potential visitors by doing so;

- **media relations** with the appointment of an agency to ensure optimal media coverage among the main European editorial offices and European and international media correspondents based in Brussels; our contacts in the ECoCs will also be called on to act as conduits to the media in their respective countries, so that they can tell intersecting stories about what will be on offer at Namur 2030 of what will be on offer at Namur 2030;
- **combination tickets** to capitalise on the audiences of festivals that attract participants from abroad (primarily KIKK and FIFF);
- generally speaking, **exchanges in terms of visibility** between **partners, primarily local, European and international cultural institutions**. Our international success will be based on the strength of our partnerships, which will enable us to achieve a vibrant and inclusive ECoC. This is discussed in detail below.

The elements related to the overall communication and marketing strategy are presented in Q/39.

4. ACTIVE AND STRUCTURED CULTURAL DIPLOMACY TO ENSURE THERE'S A LONG-TERM LEGACY

Cultural diplomacy is part of the City's strategy, with a view to achieving long-term benefits. Acquiring an international reputation also means showing what our region can offer to Europe (Q/11). Namur 2030 will be using the title of ECoC to promote the territory and its cultural events, as well as to facilitate cultural exchanges and encourage the creation of innovative projects. This raises the ECoC's international profile and, as a knock-on effect, attracts a more diverse audience. To achieve this:

- we will be highlighting the **role of the EU** in our communication assets and in public speaking (Q/42);
- we will actively involve existing networks, beginning with our **twinned towns** with which we plan to run cultural exchanges and run shared programmes;
- we will play an active part in European projects, particularly in the **digital arts** (Q/11);
- generally speaking, we will regularly invite **international delegations** to our events ;
- we will also make use of **European contacts in Brussels** (Belgian representation of the European Commission, Local office of the European Parliament, the House of European History, Europe Direct, expat networks, media correspondents, Committee of the Regions) to reach an international audience and promote Namur as an unmissable cultural destination;
- another essential factor of our cultural **diplomacy** will be close collaborations with Belgian **embassies** in other countries;

- we will be working in partnership with the agents from Wallonia-Brussels International (WBI) and the Walloon Export Agency (AWEX) to promote Namur abroad and attract **investments** in the cultural sector;
- we will capitalise on the networks of cultural operators in the territory and our **companies** that export **abroad**;
- we will encourage collaboration between **schools**, students and international artists.
- we are developing a complementary strategy for young people and are giving careful consideration to **Erasmus+ and its Blended Intensive Programme» (BIP)** through our cooperation with UNamur and other higher education institutions;
- we firmly believe that residencies for our **international artists** are a powerful tool, and so we intend to offer them a stimulating environment conducive to creativity;
- we are communicating with the **IN SITU** network, which will publicise our artistic projects in the public domain and attract artists in residence to Namur;
- we are committed to **Culture Next** to explore emerging trends in culture and innovation;
- and we will be calling on other **ECoCs** to help us with targeted communications focusing on our shared projects (Q/13).

Q/13

LINKS DEVELOPED OR TO BE DEVELOPED BETWEEN YOUR CULTURAL PROGRAMME AND THOSE OF OTHER CITIES HOLDING THE TITLE OF EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

The first phase of the bid process enabled us to explore the specific realities of each ECoC. During the second phase, we asked the cities about their differences, their vision of confluence, and how our three artistic themes resonated with their challenges. We then tested and refined our concept on other territorial scales:

AXIS 1. TEMPORAL - PAST/FUTURE

Preserving our shared heritage while adapting to future social, ecological and technological changes? Cities such as Kiruna, Oulu, Lublin and Nikšić share this need to reconcile memory and the future, to reinvent knowledge and to blend tradition and innovation. In Namur, we offer formats that examine folklore, architecture and gastronomy in light of contemporary challenges.

AXIS 2. GEOGRAPHICAL - LOCAL/GLOBAL

The tension between territorial roots and globalised uprooting is to be seen everywhere: young people leaving (Broumov, Faro), gentrification (Lemesos), migratory pressures (Bielsko-Biała, Lublin, Larnaka). In Namur, we want to respond to this tension by building bridges between neighbourhoods, cities and cultures, by promoting exchanges between residents and artistic practices (*Namur-Namen*, *Little Connex*ts), and by highlighting stories set in a global context (Focus on the bicentenary).

AXIS 3. SOCIOLOGICAL - TENSIONS/ATTENTIONS

Tensions linked to social fragmentation, inequality and forms of invisibility can be found throughout Europe. Whether it's cultural diplomacy (Larnaka), mental health (Bielsko-Biała), social or identity fragility (Lemesos, Nikšić), the ECoC candidate cities are seeking to make the

invisible visible (Lublin), to give a voice to minorities and to vulnerable and marginalised people. Our projects, such as *Weaving the edges* or *Radical Happiness* are firmly rooted in this dynamic of care, dignity and shared representation.

In addition, we have also forged numerous links with other ECoCs and transversal issues:

- about governance, communication, infrastructure and legacy with Lille 2004 (in present lille3000) and Mons 2015.
- about sustainability and slow tourism with Bourges 2028 and Broumov.
- about capacity building, the methodology of co construction with Larnaka 2030, Lublin 2029 and Matera 2019
- about volunteering with Trecin 2026, Matera 2019 and Aarhus 2017
- about accessibility with Esch 2022
- about evaluation with Trecin 2026

Our overall ambition remains twofold: to strengthen the relevance of our project across Europe, while offering artistic and collective experiences that can be replicated across the EU. Building on solid foundations was the best guarantee we had of ensuring continuity beyond 2030.

This evolving work has been fuelled by a year rich in key events: the opening ceremonies of the 2025 ECoCs, meetings between the 2030 finalist cities in Larnaka (2024) and Chemnitz (2025), an event around the 40 recommendations for the 40th anniversary of the ECoCs in Chemnitz (2025), celebration of the 20th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity in Paris (June 2025), visit to Bradford 2025, UK City of Culture, and attendance at the Culture Next conferences in Cluj-Napoca (2024), Leeuwarden and Bielsko-Biała (2025).

We have established meaningful partnerships with numerous ECoCs, with plans to expand further.
17 ECoCs are involved in our artistic projects, 9 engaged in transversal cooperation (mentoring & knowledge-sharing).

ECOC	PROJECTS OF COOPERATION - INSTITUTION	PROJECTS NAMUR 2030	SHARED TOPIC
Linz 2009	UCC in Media Arts Cultural Heritage & Media Arts U19 - create your world AEC Future of Food	F(r)ictions Folklore 2.0 The Climate In us Sow Food	Invitation to KIKK 2025 Shared residencies Call for participation in 2030 Co-curation
Riga 2014	LPNVA Āgenskalna tirgus	Music Side Sow Food	Participation in the programme Guest artist & table talk
Donostia/San Sebastián 2016	Tabakalera Donostia Kultura	Little Connex	Capacity Building Gastrodiplomacy
Novi Sad 2022	UCC in Media Arts Tamburica Fest SHORTZ Film Festival	F(r)ictions Folklore 2.0 True Stories	Invitation to KIKK 2025 Invitation to participate Exchange between festivals

Tartu 2024	Architectural Residency Vares Folk Group Art of Survival documentary UNESCO CC in traditions Maajaam	Builtopia Folklore 2. 0 True Stories Polyphonia mundi Sow Food	Invite young architects Invitation to Namur Short film screenings Record a choir in Tartu Invitation to our table talk
Nova Gorica and Gorizia 2025	Symphony Forest Choir of Eden Invisible Women Down by the River Laboratory for the Future of Food The Library of Seeds - Green Library	Dolce Vita Polyphonia Mundi That's it! Sambre 2030 Sow Food - celebrate Sow food - sow	Artwork exhibited in Namur Record a local choir Co-curation Artistic exchanges Sustainable gastronomy Seed library
Oulu 2026	Open ceremony / UCC in Media Arts Lumo Art & Tech Festival /	/ Released Expressions F(r)ictions Noctis Sow Food	European Lounges in Oulu Namur invites young artists Invitation to KIKK 2025 Club scene, artist exchange Invited artists
Trenčín 2026	Degustories Within the Sound Evaluation et monitoring	Sow Food Dolce Vita Volunteering & youth	Invitation to our table talk Exchange sharing expertise
Evora 2027	Cante Alentejano Gastronomy:beauty &resilience /	Polyphonia Mundi Sow Food - Table Talk Playground	Record an Evora choir Invitation to our table talk Evora shares its experience
Liepāja 2027	Media art association (NGO) ASTE Media art association (NGO) ASTE Europa Cantat 2027 Made to Measure	Folklore 2.0 - immersion F(r)ictions Polyphonia Mundi Weaving the Edges	Artist exchange Invitation to KIKK 2025 Recording choirs Sharing best practices
Kiruna 2029	/ Arctic Fire & Architect Arks Seeds of knowledge 100 Stages Sami joijking Behind the gates Culture knocks on your door Take a bite at nature	Slow Opening Builtopia in 2030 & Refuges Folklore 2.0 Noctis Spring Polyphonia Mundi Responsibility - That's it! Little Connexs Sow Food	Carte blanche for youth Young architects exchange Mix tradition and contemporary art Involve young people Record traditional songs Invite local artists Cultural democracy Combine food experiences
Lublin 2029	/ Motto "Re:union" Wild Kids Sanctuary Traditional music communities (women's choir) Archives about woman / Magda Franczak Water's memory Slow Food Festival Social Space for Cultural Resilience	Slow Opening Motto "Confluence" Playground Polyphonia Mundi That's it! Sambre 2030 Sow Food Weaving the Edges	Carte blanche for youth Shared philosophy Sharing experiences Record a choir in Lublin Exploring the common topic Residency L. Franczak & M. Dymiter Connection to our table talk Namur at Lublin conference
Larnaka 2030 Candidate City	Larnaka BioDesign Festival CDCD Herstories 1000 + 1 drinks Youth Maker Space Ability Campus & The Dis Festival Mahallart	Builtopia Congo Dynamo Responsibility - That's it! Sow Food - celebrate Playground Weaving the Edges Little Connexs	Exchange of design students Exhibition in Larnaka in 2030 Artist exchange Connection to the table talk Sharing best practices Namur artist in Larnaka Cultural democracy

Lemesos2030 Candidate City	Cérémonie d'ouverture, Treasure Island 1000 Voices Street Life Festival & Students CUT Sfaaact! Programme Queer waves film festival Lemesos Documentary Festival Me Meraki Artist Residency Koullou Makka Collective	/ Polyphonia Mundi Released Expressions The climate in us Noctis True Stories Rocket Weaving the Edges	Namur sea scouts Choir exchange Student participation Adaptation of the project in Lemesos Explore the world of nightlife Exchange between festivals Young artists exchange Sharing best practices
Leuven 2030 Candidate City	Docville Let's eat! Biennial of future food cultures They came to the river and they came from the road	True Stories Sow Food - L'atelier de Bossimé /	Exchange between festivals Chefs exchange Namur artist invited
Lviv 2030 Candidate City	Choir «Homin» Etnovyr Folklore Festival Lviv Media Forum ResponseAbility Art / /	Polyphonia Mundi Folklore 2.0 True Stories Responsibility Sow Food - Table talk Weaving the Edges	Preserve cultural heritage Co-curation Connection between festivals Share visions Invitation to our table talk Art therapy projects
Nikšić 2030 Candidate City	Urban Culture Festival JU Zahumlje Poetry on a Lake Nikšić Centre for Digital Arts Rock Culture Action Guslarka BREATHE (Art as Therapy)	Builtopia Folklore 2.0 Intime Festival F(r)ictions Music Side That's it! Weaving the Edges	Artistic exchanges Invited folk group Artistic exchange Invitation to KIKK 2025 Namur artists invited Gusle player invited Sharing best practices



04

Outreach

Q/14, 15 & 16

INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF THE LOCAL POPULATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BID AND THE EVENT YEAR. NEW AND SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON LINKS WITH THE EDUCATION SECTOR AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOL AUDIENCES.

From the very beginning of the preparation of this bid, through to its long-term legacy, Namur 2030 aims to remove physical, socioeconomic and symbolic barriers to cultural rights. Everyone, regardless of their background or abilities, should be able to access the full range of cultural offerings, independently and with dignity.

So, with a view to **staging the actual event**, in addition to the numerous entry points for the public and civil society via artistic projects (Q/06), our strategy aims to broaden and diversify access to culture for all sections of society.

Our strategy combines a 'quantitative' approach, with appropriate **methods to ensure involvement** (*Little Connexits*, *Confluence Hubs* and the plan for our volunteers, called *Confluencers*), with a 'qualitative' or sensitive approach, with methods to ensure **accessibility** and **inclusivity**. Let's take a closer look of these five points in the following pages.

1. PREPARATION OF THE BID

First, to develop this strategy, Namur 2030 drew on

- the City's track record, which, since 2013, has deliberately made the process of developing its cultural policy a more democratic matter (Q/02);
- the track record of the Province of Namur which, since 2021, has implemented participatory budgets totalling €200 000 a year. These have already benefited 15 000 participants through 30 projects submitted to a vote by nearly 30 000 people;
- its collaboration with nearly **250 local structures in civil society, including the socio-cultural, care and business sectors**, as well as a number of strategic consultation bodies;
- the objectives of Creative Europe and territorial cohesion policies; the recommendations stemming from the major texts in this field, namely the European Charter of Fundamental Rights; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (article 30); the priorities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 4 (quality education), Goal 10 (reduced inequalities) and Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities).

For Bid Book 1, three initial encounters brought together 150 stakeholders. Since then, **1,000 participants**, broken down into 6 theme-based workshops, took their work a step further. In addition, we organised 150 bilateral meetings; an initial membership campaign entitled '*Together, what are we building?*', inviting the public to share their ideas and aspirations; but also stands to provide information and encourage people to get involved as part of major events in the region; monthly public presentations on the progress of the project (our 'Confluence Points', Q/39). We also created analogue and digital support kits and began to put the proposed volunteer network on a formal footing.

For Bid Book 2, we set ourselves the target of assembling **5,000 local citizens and stakeholders** to consolidate the bid. It was an ambitious task, but we did it. In doing so, we successfully promoted cross-sector cooperation and took full advantage of people's expertise (Q/02). It was all made possible in particular thanks to:

- local provincial, regional and international political and institutional consultation (Q/11, 13 & 43);
- the energy to design 8 *Confluence Hubs* and 46 *Little Connexits* (see below);
- working groups organised by artistic project and thematic axis (Q/09);
- the involvement of several groups of students from the University of Namur and high schools;
- our *Confluence Points* and the fifty public presentations organised for businesses, schools, care centres, government departments, tourism providers, etc.

2. STAGING OF THE EVENT

The challenge of this collective preparation is not just about numbers. The work of gathering information, assessing needs, consulting and co-constructing has enabled us to develop:

- a solid artistic vision in line with territory and European concerns) and which promotes 'Confluence' as a method ;
- long-term opportunities for local artists and cultural operators ;
- strong artistic projects, many of which are based on significant participation by local people: *Slow Opening, Action, Folklore Forum, Dolce Vita, Sow Food, Grand Puzzle Parade, Sambre 2030, Playground, Weaving the edges, Intimacies, In unison* (Q/06).

And, of course, this has enabled us to roll out our current strategy, which includes:

- **programmes for getting the whole of the population involved:** *Little Connexits* and *Confluence Hubs* and an extensive volunteering plan for the *Confluencers*;
- **methods of accessibility** enabling a maximum number of audiences with disabilities or neurodivergence to attend;
- **methods of inclusivity** for individual groups in their own right (young people and various marginalised audiences).

By doing so, Namur 2030 has set itself the goal of becoming a **transferable model** of inclusive cultural city, one in which each and every person is not only able to access culture, but also to become an actor of that culture. Which is why we have foreseen an:

- An **Outreach and Involvement Department** dedicated to meeting these challenges with the Namur 2030 team;
- This department **interacts with the Artistic Direction team** to make projects more relevant, particularly in

3. METHODS FOR GETTING PEOPLE INVOLVED

We have structured our strategy for getting people involved based on a strong local presence and a large network of volunteers.

- ***Little Connexits*** (3.1.) and ***Confluence Hubs*** (3.2.) together

And we're not stopping there. This summer, we will be launching a major awareness campaign across the region to celebrate the work accomplished so far by the people and to continue raising funds and energy for the next stage of the adventure.

- terms of democratisation; participation; gender equality and equal opportunities; non-discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people, people in vulnerable situations, people suffering from social exclusion or disabilities, people targeted by racism, anti-Semitism or sexism; vulnerable age groups; the digital divide;
- This department **interacts with the Communication Department** to develop a consistent brand and an inclusive strategy (including digital); strong partnerships with local media as key contacts and conduits; media literacy; local influencer marketing; and a focus on audiences with disabilities (Q/39, 40 & 41);
- Namur 2030 is generally committed to recruiting, in general, to recruiting a diverse range of people who, together, embody artistic excellence combined with a deep understanding of the civic dynamics of the territory. Our **General Manager** is the embodiment of this approach. She started out as a social worker and then progressed within the Namur ecosystem to become general manager of the KIKK Festival, an internationally renowned digital arts event. But we should also mention the other team members who come from trade unions, cultural and artistic circles, associations and even the local medical community. These are all energetic individuals who are directly involved in developing projects and who are able to ensure that those projects are truly inclusive;
- We are working to join or create networks on these topics with **European partners** in order to exchange best practices, collaborate on innovative projects and forge long-term partnerships (Q/11 & 13);
- Putting this strategy into operation is monitored and assessed by the **Namur Cultural Observatory** (Q/04) so that it can be made available to other towns and cities, both locally and even at a European level. Scientific and public communication will be specifically organised on the issue of cultural rights, as promoted by Namur 2030.

- ensure that there is a network capable of guaranteeing that none of the 500,000 inhabitants of the territory is more than 500 metres from a cultural venue in Namur city or more than 10 kilometres from one outside Namur.
- As for our major **volunteering plan** (3.3.), we are putting

it in place to provide a framework to cover anyone in the local area and beyond who would like to become involved in Namur 2030. We call these volunteers 'Confluencers'.

In all three instances, we have established a link with the participatory artistic projects presented in Q6 so that we can then invite the people participating in the Little Connexs and Confluence Hubs, as well as the Confluencers to play an active part in the event itself.

These three main lines of involvement are firmly established in what is a particularly close-knit network of associations, which form the backbone of the region. These (local) people will be our go-to allies in making Namur 2030 a Capital of Culture that is totally involved in and committed to everyday life and social diversity. It's a fact: every week, thousands of Namur inhabitants already take part in amateur artistic activities throughout the region. These include folklore, sports, popular festivals and social projects. To give an example, the Royal Music Federation of the Province of Namur unites nearly 3 000 instrumentalists and singers. The Namur Amateur Theatre Association embraces 70 companies (representing nearly 2 000 performers). The Maison du Chant Choral (the Choral Singing Centre) runs more than 200 choirs, bringing together some 8 000 singers. All of these groups are involved in the artistic projects proposed for Namur 2030 (Q/06).

3.1 LITTLE CONTEXTS

Namur is definitely a digital and connected place. But the people who live in the city suffer from isolation: 41% of people live alone, with this figure rising to 60% in some neighbourhoods. This is a reality shared across the EU. 13% of Europeans say they suffer from loneliness. In Namur, many neighbourhood committees (including one of the most dynamic around the Cinex in the Saint-Nicolas neighbourhood) claim for spaces of their own to enable residents and users to (re)build close ties with one another.

To provide a practical response to this issue, Namur 2030 is implementing *Little Connexs*, where:

- people can meet without necessarily having to eat or drink anything (i.e. it doesn't have to cost them anything), but just being able to go and be there;
- the cultural and artistic needs and initiatives of residents in each neighbourhood are supported with human and material resources.

With a budget of €5 million (spread across the years leading up to 2030, during 2030 itself and beyond), this initiative is not about 'reinventing the wheel'. What we are doing here is building on the **valuable groundwork carried** out by community centres, youth centres, continuing education associations, social mediators from public social welfare centres, cultural centres, medical centres, neighbourhood committees and other citizen groups with whom we wrote the methodology for the project.

First of all, to become *Little Connexs*, citizen projects must be located in one of the 46 neighbourhoods of Namur (once you get beyond the 46 neighbourhoods, people will be invited to join the *Confluence Hubs* initiative). This division of location allows for targeted work to be carried out in a variety of contexts (both geographically, between urban, peri-urban and rural areas,

and sociologically, with a wide variety of backgrounds). It also addresses a frequently heard concern: that the centre of Namur does not take sufficient care of its older villages on the outskirts of the city area, which sometimes feel neglected.

So, to encourage confluence, *Little Connexs* are being developed at a rate of one per neighbourhood. If a group of collectives expresses a wish to create or certify a location in the same neighbourhood, they will be encouraged to work together. That's what confluence is all about.

The aim is to have 46 *Little Connexs* by 2030 (3 prototypes in 2026, 6 *Little Connexs* in 2027, 12 *Little Connexs* in 2028 and 23 *Little Connexs* in 2029). However, we are avoiding taking a top-down approach, so the targets stated are merely guidelines. Also, although this is by no means an exclusionary criterion; ensuring the site's long-term future beyond 2030 is also an objective that will need to be supported in accordance with the specific characteristics of each neighbourhood and in coordination with the City of Namur. This is to avoid a sudden change taking place in 2031.

Little Connexs may be indoor or outdoor locations: it can be a community vegetable garden, a former shop, village church, digital public space, playground, community centre, etc. However, to remain 'on a human scale', each *Little Connexs* is calculated in square metres per person. So, if the citizens' collective consists of two people, the *Little Connexs* may consist of a space of 2 square metres. In terms of opening hours, *Little Connexs* have to commit to being available on a regular basis, which will encourage routine habits. This means that in some more rural areas and taking certain types of work into account (particularly in farming), this could lead to early morning opening hours.

That said, our prototype experience in Herbatte has taught us that it is essential to start with people rather than places. As a result, the methodology used for all *Little Connexs* consists of several stages. During each stage, Namur 2030 will provide support in governance, production, communication and networking (via a *Little Connexs* committee), enabling each *Little Connexs* to benefit from support tailored to the needs of its own particular community.

Starting from phase 1, Namur 2030 is setting up a "human toolbox" consisting of artists who are willing to make themselves available to the *Little Connexs*. They will be coordinated by Sarah Vanhee and Camille Louis, two artists with many years of experience in large-scale participatory projects, and by companies based in Namur that are accustomed to working closely with local communities (such as Cie Victor B and Cie des Bonimenteurs). With a view to building up this large toolbox, Namur 2030 will launch a call for applications at the end of 2025 that will be open to artists from all disciplines.

Phase 0 – Information and awareness — Namur 2030 communicates with the entire local district and raises awareness of the project; local artists and performers and collectives (e.g. theatre companies based in the neighbourhoods in question) are invited to sit around the table to form a core group and begin pooling their ideas;

Phase 1 – Dream and diagnosis — The exploratory work begins with external artists and performers from the ‘human toolbox’. This is in order to ask ‘what kind of neighbourhood do we want to create together?’ and to map out what already exists. For example, one type of support could be that already provided by the Brussels Video Centre in the Saint Nicolas district to produce a documentary about the local area;

Phase 2 – Emergence — The move forward to decide on the location is made after the collective has been structured and its governance by local people and participatory budget have been established;

Phase 3 – Labelling and prototyping — The choice of location is approved and we then define what its charter should be and its gradual implementation;

Phase 4 – Putting into operation — The inauguration, with an official festive opening, will take place at a time considered appropriate by the collective (between 2026 and 2030) and may include brass bands, parades, open days at the *Little Connexits*, themed guided walks, the unveiling of murals, etc.

Phase 5 – Sharing — The creation of a large multidisciplinary safari trail running through the 46 districts of Namur has been entrusted to an artistic team (including local authors Christelle Delbrouck and Mélanie De Groote) which, during 2030, will roll out poetic signage, audio travel diaries and permanent traces that will create a contemporary legend in 46 episodes of the *Little Connexits*, based on immersive encounters conducted throughout 2029.

3.2 CONFLUENCE HUBS

77% of the population in our project territory lives outside the city of Namur. The poorest areas of Wallonia are located mainly in the south of the province. That is why we have decided to divide our events 60%-40% between Namur city itself and the rest of the region. It is also why we have set up eight *Confluence Hubs* spread across eight symbolically defined areas or structured around their ‘water territories’, because before humans, it was water that first created confluence (Q/02).

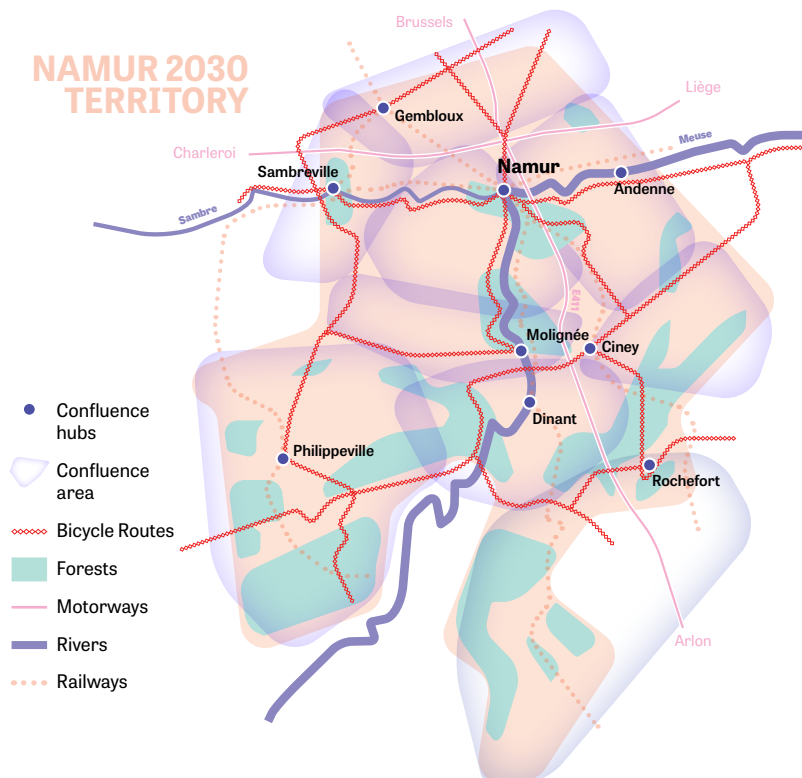
Starting from the initial bid phase, the *Confluence Hubs* have established themselves as true cornerstones. Implemented within existing socio-cultural structures (cultural centres, libraries and various other places), the way they are outlined has changed significantly during this second phase.

- First, a large-scale consultation of local people kicked off in January 2025, in the form of a major roadshow of meetings and encounters.
- Working in this way made it possible to conduct an in-depth diagnosis of the area, creating an inventory of cultural facilities linked to the population density of the local authority areas. The median income of the local residents was also looked at, as well as an index reflecting mobility and access to fundamental rights in each municipality.

- The process highlighted the importance of expanding the project by creating an eighth *Confluence Hub* in Rochefort, thereby ensuring balanced coverage of the south-east of the region.
- The ‘Conference of Mayors’, held on 14th March 2025 with the support of the Governor of the Province further strengthened political support for the project.
- The final workshop brought the 9 areas together on 18th March 2025, marking a decisive step in the process, with more than 200 participants.

Today, the *Confluence Hubs* are viewed as hubs of life at the intersection of culture, society, tourism and the economy. The following has been clarified:

- **the fundamental missions** of the Confluence Hubs are: forging links between poorly connected neighbouring areas by staging collective events, creating a space for innovation to develop and support community projects; helping to promote the identity and collective history of each community;
- the targets for **accessibility** and soft **mobility** (rollout of *Confluence Hubs* close to stations,
- the **cultural network**, by connecting not only to 134 cultural facilities, but also to 1 138 local events and initiatives that already exist prior to Namur 2030;
- the role as an **embassy** of Namur 2030 and gateway to all of the artistic projects being staged for Namur 2030;
- a total **budget** of €9 million;
- the **Confluence Hubs** projects are designed to **echo the general artistic programme** of Namur 2030, highlighting their unique features, such as jazz in Dinant (the town where Adolphe Sax was born);
- finally, the *Confluence Hubs* will stage **three major artistic projects**: the **Confluence Weekend**, in which each community becomes the heart of the ECoC for a long weekend; *Grand Puzzle Parade*, the major celebration staged on the river (Q/06); and the creation of *Alternative Routes*, sensitive trails, artistic and sensory routes inviting visitors to rediscover the natural and heritage richness of the region (Q/06).



3.3 CONFLUENCERS

Confluencers are the main volunteer ambassadors of Namur 2030. Taking our inspiration from successful experiences in Aarhus and Matera, we intend to build an active, diverse and committed community, for whom we can guarantee a safe, non-exploitative, educational and rewarding environment. By doing so, we can make this axis as a **main line of access to culture** and a renewal of community life.

To make this happen, Namur 2030 can rely on the support of:

- the City and its department dedicated to Volunteering, Citizen Participation and Education, which has a Citizens' Centre designed as a space for dialogue, services and participation. The city has been awarded the national '**Local Volunteering Authority**' label and is also committed to applying for the title of European Volunteering Capital in 2029 to promote the development of a strong network of volunteers by 2030. In doing so, it will incorporate this dynamic into municipal policies in a sustainable manner, leaving a legacy with an international dimension, particularly for young Confluencers (see Q11.1 & 11.2);
- the Province, which already provides a unique **free insurance** scheme covering all active volunteers against civil liability and physical injury and offering legal assistance (since its introduction in 2007, 25,000 days of volunteering have been covered).

A **Confluencer** is a person who:

- **is invested** in Namur 2030 and who gives a few hours of their time each week or month; acting as an ambassador in their local neighbourhood or village (wearing a badge, distributing information, etc.), or a more practical facilitator (offering, for example, a carpooling service to a Namur 2030 event, proposing accommodation at one's home, interpreting services to facilitate communication between non-French-speaking artists and participants, etc.);
- benefits from the complete information about the ECoC's activities, as well as **tailored support** from a resource person (from the Namur 2030 Involvement Department) and a dedicated, intuitive mobile app with a forum system able to create an online community;
- attends **Confluencer Points**: sessions, making it possible to organise the community and its aims;
- actively participates in the life of the organisation by helping to develop the **Confluencers Charter**, which is a structuring, motivating and reassuring tool that places volunteering within an ethical, participatory and sustainable framework that matches our overall aims;
- has undergone appropriate **training** (reception, cultural mediation, running events, digital communication, sustainable management, etc.) to develop professional skills;
- is given a **Confluencer Pass** providing access to exclusive events reserved for the extended Confluence family and facilitating access to numerous events through priority booking and discounted rates;
- is allowed to receive reimbursements, because although volunteering is by nature an act given freely, we have to ensure that it remains accessible to all. Belgian law allows

for reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses to be made, which we provide in the form of a fixed allowance.

This scheme also has an **intergenerational dimension** supported by:

- on the one hand, numerous general, technical, vocational and specialised secondary schools; the Namur Academic Centre (PAN), which brings together all higher education institutions in the province and the University of Namur; youth movements (scouts, guides, pioneers, patro, etc. – all historically deeply rooted and unifying forces within Belgian society); and youth centres, in order to reach a diverse range of young people;
- and on the other, the Namur Municipal Advisory Council for Older People, an active and recognised body that plays a key role in promoting the involvement of people aged 55 and over.

Older people (who account for one in three volunteers in Belgium, illustrating precisely how valuable their commitment is to the social and cultural fabric) are involved in designing specific activities that showcase their experience, memories and expertise to younger people. We also rely on European programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps to give young people in the region an exciting perspective on Europe. The whole initiative is inspired by the intergenerational coaching programme called Duo for a Job, which was created in Belgium in 2013 and which focuses on volunteering.

Our volunteering programme is designed to be inclusive and makes sure that it is also accessible to the disabled, new arrivals and asylum-seekers. This is made possible thanks to the support and resources of the French-speaking Volunteer Platform (PFV) and the Volonterre asylum network.

The scheme has a 'business' component, because Namur 2030 considers company employees to be cultural stakeholders in their own right. The aim, particularly through the Namur 2030 Business Club, is for every employee in the region to be able to enjoy an artistic experience at their workplace between 2026 and the end of 2030 (Q23). To strengthen human ties, professional pride and a sense of belonging to the region through meaningful encounters with artistic creativity, Namur 2030 offers micro-experiences in the form of pop-up workshops (writing, theatre, visual arts, slam poetry, etc.) during lunch breaks or working hours. Through this initiative, Namur 2030 also aims to showcase and promote amateur and semi-professional artists by creating the '*Artiste de l'intérieur*' network. This approach will be supported by specific modules for managers to incorporate culture as a springboard for change, human innovation and high-quality relationships.

4. ACCESSIBILITY

Namur 2030 aims to break down barriers and reduce isolation by focusing on the ease of **access of cultural venues** (4.1.) and the implementation of **tools and measures specifically designed for broader audiences** (4.2.).

We should note here that the *Weaving the edges* project (Q/06) is part of this commitment to guarantee enhanced access to culture for many so-called 'disadvantaged' audiences, including those who are housebound, receiving care, living in precarious conditions or marginalised. *Weaving the edges* also seeks to build permanent bridges between its artistic project and the overall strategy.

4.1 ACCESS TO CULTURAL VENUES

Let's start by talking about **mobility**. For Namur 2030, making cultural venues accessible means ensuring that public transport services are improved (particularly in the evenings and at weekends), introducing new 'city centre' shuttle buses, and promoting the emergence of taxis for people with reduced mobility or a car-sharing platform. We are working on this policy with transport operators and the relevant authorities, including TEC and SNCB. Among the projects already underway in Namur are the extension of the pedestrian zone in the city centre, a better structured and coordinated cycle network run by the Walloon Public Service, improved links between different modes of transport at local stations, a territorial network via *Confluence Hubs* and the development of multimodal infrastructure (mobility points, park-and-ride facilities, river shuttles and special trains for peak periods in 2030). Access to Namur train station, which is included in the SNCB Accessibility Plan, is also a strategic link, providing connections to European networks such as Rail4All and Eurocities Access. In 2030 and beyond, Namur will be a city that can be travelled to and within differently and which better connects people to culture.

Once travel has been made easier, let's talk about the places where the cultural events are being held. In order to reduce symbolic barriers, Namur 2030 intends to use **public spaces** in many of its artistic projects to enable (an initial) contact with artists and culture in a setting that is less intimidating than a museum or theatre. That said, a good accessibility strategy must be based on having **permanent and accessible venues**. We are taking the NCC's efforts to establish the positioning and ownership of existing cultural venues in the area a step further by adding only two venues that have been deemed necessary: *Rive* and *Tribune* (Q/44). It should be added here that the incorporation of inclusive architecture and design principles is not limited to standards for people with reduced mobility (PRM). Instead, it is part of a universal design approach inspired by the *Design for All* platform promoted by the Council of Europe. We are also thinking more broadly about uses, thresholds, pathways, signage (Q/39) and the mental and **social accessibility of cultural spaces**, working with specialist associations (L'Architecture qui dégenre, Plain-Pied) in order to break down the invisible barriers that too clearly separate public and cultural spaces, while also promoting forms of hybridisation.

We should also mention the cost of attending and enjoying the many events. Namur 2030 aims to have over **50% of its events staged free of charge**. And for those activities where a charge is made, we will ensure that they will all have Article 27 pricing. Article 27 is a system that guarantees access to cultural offerings for everyone through a €1.25 ticket price.

4.2 SPECIFIC TOOLS AND DEVICES

Generally speaking, Namur 2030 will follow the recommendations of key players in our region, such as access-i, through 360° diagnostic assessments. Namur 2030 will provide specific training for its welcoming teams, as well as for its Involvement and Communication departments. Namur 2030 will also ensure that its print and digital media comply with current standards, in particular with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).

Namur 2030 is partnering with five research centres at UNamur and the Catholic University of Louvain (NADI, TRAIL, PiLAB, Openhub and MIII), where researchers, specialist associations and people with disabilities are designing new and truly inclusive systems. **Digital technology** is omnipresent in the research for Namur 2030 because, in the face of inequality, tech provides a powerful lever for removing barriers to access and for adapting experiences to specific needs. We present some of the proposals here which we would like to see take on a wider scope.

For hearing disabilities — Namur is proud to be a pioneer in welcoming people **who are deaf and hearing-impaired**. Launched as private initiatives in the field of education, they have spread like wildfire. Deaf and hearing-impaired people in Namur are always able to find welcoming environments, leisure activities and education suited to their needs, starting from the nursery school, right through to end-of-life care. Namur also has a professional interpreting service (Signes & Vous, S.I.S.W.), as well as bilingual tours in sign language developed by tourist guides, bilingual shows in cultural centres, a university sign language laboratory (LSFB-Lab) and a pioneering bilingual immersion school.

Namur 2030 is very much part of this dynamic and aims to enhance and reinforce what already exists by:

- supporting the European movement for the recognition of sign languages as languages in their own right;
- highlighting visual and gestural languages at Intime Festival, which is planning its 2030 edition to be for and by deaf and hearing people. The initiative actively seeks diversity and plans include organising a conference on the issue and creating a show (see Q06);
- working with sign language interpreters to help translate the concerts live.

Namur 2030 also incorporates the technological facilities of UNamur and UCL and plans to have:

- applications with subtitling in real-time,
- applications for real-time sign language translation,
- videos with adaptive subtitles that can be viewed on tablets or smartphones during performances.

For visual disabilities — For **visually impaired audiences**, Namur 2030 is expanding its range of performances that include readings or audio descriptions (following the example of the Intime Festival, FIFF Campus and the Grignoux cinema). More generally, oral communication is encouraged, particularly through our proposal to have **street announcers** tell people about the programme (Q/39). This is also an opportunity to mention that 10% of the Belgian population is unable to read or write, or can do

so only to a limited extent. For this reason, we are working with Alpha 5000, Lire et écrire and PAF Audiodescription to adopt appropriate signage and promote the use of spoken language across the board.

Namur 2030 will also be incorporating the technological facilities of UNamur and UCL and providing for:

- audio description via headphones or mobile app (live or pre-recorded),
- digital touchscreen or interactive booklets for exploring works in digital relief,
- applications that provide voice descriptions for works of art or read museum labels,
- signposts that guide visitors through cultural spaces via smartphone.

For motor disabilities and reduced mobility — In addition to basic accessibility measures (parking, shuttle buses, ramps, lifts, adapted toilets, dedicated performance and museum spaces, etc.), Namur 2030 intends to integrate the European Disability Card (EDC) into its ticketing and information systems, with the aim of ensuring a smooth, inclusive and European experience for visitors with disabilities.

Namur 2030 will also incorporate the technological facilities of UNamur and UCL and will have:

- immersive 360° virtual tours or virtual reality tours, allowing remote access or access for people with

limited mobility,

- telepresence robots enabling interactive and virtual remote participation.

For neurodivergent visitors — From 2026 onwards, we will be supporting performing arts organisations in setting up ‘*Relax*’ initiatives aimed at neurodivergent people (with autism, phobias, attention disorders, mental health issues, etc.), whether adults or children. ‘*Relax*’ performances allow the somewhat rigid protocol of theatre performances to be adapted to the needs of those concerned: special welcome at events, dimmed lighting rather than complete darkness, muted sounds and music rather than surprise effects, open doors rather than closed rooms, greater spacing between audience members, etc. ‘*Relax*’ performances are better known in the English-speaking world and we are helping to spread them in Belgium and Europe.

For mental health — With the collaboration with mental health professionals, a committed and structured local ecosystem, the *Dolce Vita* programmes, the *Responsibility* and *That's it!* exhibitions, the *Radical Happiness* parade, and other initiatives, these spaces have become places to reflect on mental health issues and promote a culture of inclusivity. The City of Namur is also supporting a museum prescription project that aims to integrate museum visits into mental health care pathways as a lever for well-being, social reintegration and cultural connection.

5. INCLUSIVITY

Confluence is all about inclusivity. For Namur 2030, inclusivity means giving everyone a place at every level. When we mentioned *Weaving the edges* above, we were talking about a project that provides access to cultural and artistic venues and facilities. But *Weaving the edges* also offers many so-called ‘disadvantaged’ audiences, those who are housebound, in care, vulnerable or marginalised, the opportunity to take part in the creative process, to produce their own stories and hence to breathe their own vision of the world into it, making it broader. Fairer. That’s what all of our projects are about across the board. **The Outreach and Involvement Department** is responsible for ensuring social, digital, age, gender and language inclusivity in all artistic projects and mobilisation initiatives.

The living conditions of people who are impoverished, sick, marginalised or imprisoned force them to devote most of their energy, time, creativity and ideas to simply surviving. This is something that Confluence takes into account, because Confluence is all about providing care and creating bonds. For the entire Namur 2030 team and its partners, it is also:

- a set of privileges to be made aware of;
- an art and a methodology of artistic vision
- a responsibility, particularly through our *Responsible Digital Laboratory*;
- a challenge of governance (Q/31);
- principles of communication (Q/09);
- deliberate resistance and celebration, particularly among younger generations. It is this latter aspect that we are focusing on here.

For the Namur 2030 team, developing audiences cannot be achieved without radical inclusivity (in the sense of inclusivity at its core). That’s why *Refoodgees* is designed to combine gastronomy and socio-professional inclusion. That’s why *Intimacies* uses photography and memory to raise the question of LGBTQIA+ inclusivity. That’s why the *Little Connexits* bring together all those involved in social integration and the fight against homelessness. And that’s why *Noctis* is dedicating a night to them, as well as to night workers (who are often vulnerable).

This is also why we have initiated discussions with the Mediation Centre for Travelling people and Roma, based in Namur, focusing in particular on fairground arts, gypsy jazz and the circus. The projects under discussion include a Christmas concert at the Delta, organised every year, which will be expanded, and music workshops with the Conservatoire, the IMEP and in the *Little Connexits*. Namur is one of the only municipalities in Belgium with a dedicated site. There are an estimated 20 000 travelling people living in Belgium and 10 000 coming from neighbouring countries, divided equally between Wallonia and Flanders. There are 30 000 Roma people in Belgium, 10 000 to 15 000 of whom live in Wallonia.

And finally, that’s why we have put a dedicated plan in place for children and young people, which is presented here.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Now it's our turn! is the name of the entire Namur 2030 programme dedicated to new generations, aimed at strengthening their power to act in the cultural, artistic and civic sectors. Our strategy includes reaching young people through schools, but it is by no means limited to just this. Our entire approach is part of:

- children's rights, but also the right to childhood, to live a life different from that of adults;
- a fight against infantilism, systemic discrimination that consists of viewing young people as immature, untrustworthy and illegitimate;
- a punk philosophy of childhood and youth advocated by the Namur philosopher Gilles Abel;
- the challenges of democratic trust, civic engagement and climate justice, which are major concerns for the younger generation across Europe;
- the European dynamic of child-friendly and learning cities;
- local findings, including that in Namur there is higher risk of poverty among 18-24 year olds than among the general population, with an upward trend, and, at the Walloon level, the figure of 1 in 5 are living below the poverty line;
- measures designed to promote mental health among young people, a subject of concern for many in the socio-cultural sectors of the region since the Covid-19 pandemic.

This strategy has an intergenerational dimension, which we mentioned in Q08. Here, we would add that our programme is based on **more than a hundred identified partners**, with around fifty already involved and with whom we are pursuing a strategy of inclusivity at the grassroots level, drawing on solid concepts such as Hart's Ladder of Participation and aiming for its highest levels: co-construction, co-decision and autonomy. We have identified four age groups for four complementary approaches.

0-6-YEAR-OLDS AWAKENING TO CULTURE

In collaboration with organisations experienced in cultural approaches for young children (CAVEMA, CCN, PECA, libraries, Delta, etc.), we will be offering nurseries and pre-schools a tailored artistic and sensory programme: music, music therapy, dance, visual arts, reading, motor skills, bilingual storytelling in sign language and games. Experiences designed with children in mind, to enable the youngest children to fully enjoy the Namur 2030 adventure.

PARTNERS

National Children's Office (ONE), CAVEMA, Namur Cultural Centre, Le Delta, Jeunesses Musicales de Namur, Grand Manège, Namur Library, TreM.a – Museum of Ancient Arts, nurseries, nursery schools, the non-profit organisation Re-création.

6-12-YEAR-OLDS DREAMING OF THE CITY FROM A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

As part of *Alternative Routes*, children produce sensitive maps of the area and imagine an ideal city. Stories, models, images, objects, etc. contribute to a multifaceted representation of their environment. This work is based on workshops of expressions led by artists from various disciplines (visual arts, digital arts, theatre, puppetry, etc.) in collaboration with the PECA (Cultural and Artistic Education Programme of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation).

With *Playground*, over several years, groups of child builders are trained in practical skills before passing on their experience to others, culminating in the creation of a temporary play space in the summer of 2030. Inspired by critical and emancipatory pedagogies, this approach recognises the political power of children.

Finally, we are developing training courses for teachers who wish to enable culture to become fully integrated into schools through specific educational tools and allow children to continue dreaming about the city beyond 2030.

PARTNERS

Namur Cultural Centre, Inter-Network Institute for Continuing Vocational Training (IFPC), Self-Learning and Continuing Education Centre (CAF), PECA Cultural and Artistic Education Programme, primary schools, libraries, CEC, playgrounds and youth movements, Tapage Studio, Graine de son.



12-18-YEAR-OLDS QUESTIONING AND SUGGESTING

How? By collectively writing, starting in 2026, a Manifesto on the major challenges facing Namur in 2030, which will be presented to the public authorities. The process will take place both inside and outside the school environment, drawing on the involvement of youth organisations, such as youth centres, youth movements, sports clubs and scientific youth groups, etc. The Manifesto takes the form, on the one hand, of active participation in artistic projects, with a focus on co-creation (producing podcasts, writing plays, producing digital content, designing fanzines, etc.); and, on the other, encounters with European artists (open debates, practical or artistic workshops).

One example is *The Climate in us*, a major artistic project that symbolises the ability of secondary school pupils to challenge adult perceptions and, through art, address contemporary environmental challenges in a powerful, intelligent and sensitive way.

Finally, in an approach to mediation via schools, *True Stories* combines critical workshops, collaborative creations, hybrid formats and meetings with professionals from journalism, the media, digital culture and research, enabling 'future adults' to question their relationship with truth, narration and the manipulation of images and stories, artificial intelligence, digital identity, attention grabbing, surveillance and algorithmic logic.

PARTNERS

Delta, Red Cross centres, secondary schools, MADO (Namur Youth Centre), youth centres, community centres, sports federations, youth movements, cultural centres, art schools, youth information centres, social services, AMO, Tapage Studio, Graine de son.

18-25-YEAR-OLDS DECIDING AND CREATING

This age group is actively participating in the governance of Namur 2030 (general meeting, theme-based committees and artistic juries) and its artistic programming. A participatory budget has been allocated to them in order to carry out their own artistic and programmatic projects, particularly during the *Slow Opening* or *Noctis*. This co-creation framework was already launched **this year** with more than 500 higher education students who took ownership of the Namur 2030 projects through hackathons, dedicated sessions to question how we live, celebrate, transform or travel through the territory. But also to address fundamental issues such as discrimination, gender stereotypes, digital technology, sustainability and mental health.

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the theme of confluence will also be central to the 2 000 students in the Creative and Digital Industries department at HEAJ. For students at the HEPN, the focus will be more specifically on the river Sambre, as part of the *Sambre 2030* project. *The Night* will be the all-pervading theme at UNamur in 2027-2028.

While a specific strategy has been drawn up with the PAN (Pôle académique de Namur) to support the entire student community towards 2030 (with a particular focus on exchanges between young Europeans through specific calls for artistic projects and programmes such as Erasmus or Erasmus+), we are also working with technical and vocational courses that have long been neglected in European youth programmes. It's even a process at the heart of *Builtopia* and *Shelters*.

Finally, in order to reflect the diversity of Namur's youth among our identified audiences, we pay particular attention to NEETs (young people who are not in education, employment or training) and MENA (unaccompanied foreign minors). Summarised in a rather dehumanising way by acronyms, these groups require us to take their 'volatility' into account along with the clandestine existence they risk falling into as adults. One member of the Namur 2030 team is specifically dedicated to these children and young adults. Our methodology will be based on an approach of outreach, relationship building and step-by-step co-construction. Commitment is built by listening to their experiences, their stories and their forms of expression, using flexible tools that are tailored to and rooted in their daily lives. There is no pressure or obligation. Projects such as *Released Expressions* or *Music side* could provide the ideal background for embarking on a work.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, at the end of 2030 and if this is the wish of the young people, we will support them in the set up of Namur's candidacy for the title of European Youth Capital. A logical continuation.

PARTNERS

UNamur, HEAJ, IMEP, HEPN (High School of Province of Namur), PAN (Namur Academic Centre), Higher School of Tourism and Public Relations, Namur Media Centre, Euroskills, youth movements, community centres.



05

Management

a. Finance

OPERATING BUDGET

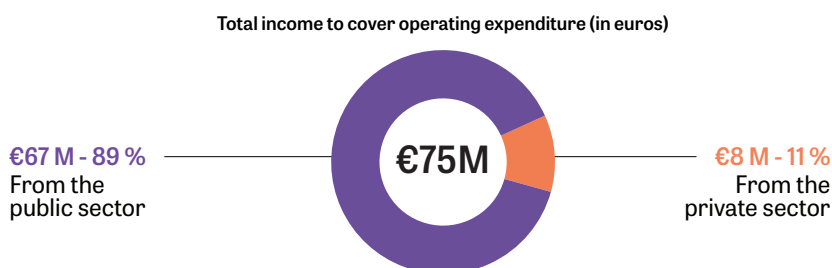
INCOME TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE

Q/17

PLEASE CONFIRM OR UPDATE
THE BUDGET FIGURES

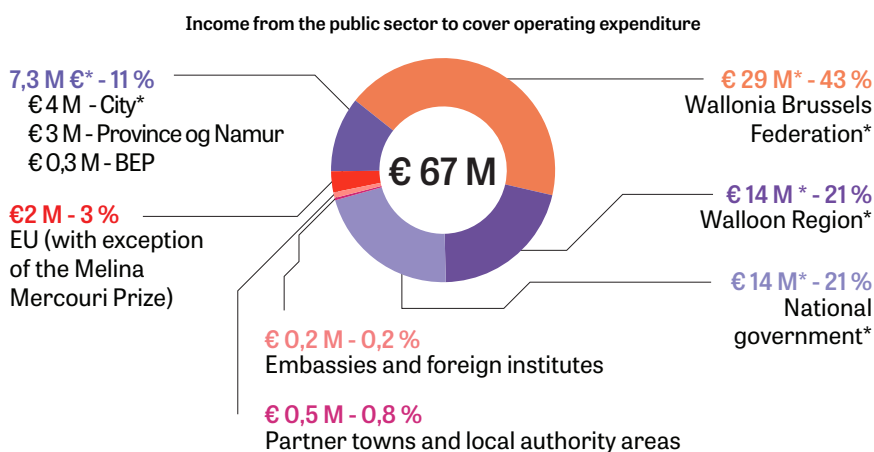
Based on the programmes proposed, including communication costs and general overheads, a provisional budget of €75 million has been calculated (€4 million of the budget presented in Bid Book 1 has been earmarked for infrastructure development in order to optimise the legacy, see Q/26). This figure is made up of 89% public funds and 11% private funds. This amount takes into account the use of financial resources prior to, during and 2 years after the ECoC year.

Q/18

TOTAL OPERATING
BUDGET

INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Q/19

WHAT IS THE BREAKDOWN OF THE INCOME TO
BE RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO
COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE ?

* and € 1 M allocated for infrastructure cf. Q/26

Q/20

HAVE THE PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITIES (CITY, REGION, STATE) ALREADY VOTED ON OR MADE FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE? IF NOT, WHEN WILL THEY DO SO?

Decisions on budgetary commitments at each level of political power have been approved by the relevant executive authorities.

Local authorities: all municipalities of the territory concerned have confirmed their membership of the 'Namur 2030 and Beyond' non-profit organisation (ASBL). This includes an entry fee and the principle of subsequent financial contributions to be determined during the first half of 2026 according to the programmes to be produced/co-produced in their respective areas.

For its part, the **City of Namur** voted on 28th January 2025 to grant an initial subsidy (€500 000 for 2025), while on 3rd June 2025, it gave in-principle approval for a subsidy of €4,5 million to be spread over the period from 2026 to 2032.

The **Province of Namur** voted to support the project to the tune of

€3 million at the Provincial Board meeting held on 24th June 2024;

With regard to the **Walloon Region**, following the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 22nd August 2024, the Ministers gave formal approval of their support and agreement in principle for €15 million, tasking the Minister for Local Authorities with implementing the decision.

For the **Wallonia-Brussels Federation** (FWB), the €30 million agreement is included in a letter signed by the Minister-President dated 26th August 2024.

Finally, on 17th May 2024, the **Federal Government**, through the Council of Ministers, decided to ask the National Lottery to set aside €15 million (i.e. 3 million euros per year per year for five years : 2026-2030) for the Belgian city that is awarded the title of European Capital of Culture.

Q/21

WHAT IS YOUR FUNDRAISING STRATEGY TO SEEK FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM UNION PROGRAMMES/FUNDS TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE?

European funds act as a strategic lever for the project and provide a lasting legacy for Namur 2030. Our candidature aims to establish a genuine European mindset in the territory by strengthening local skills that will attract this funding. This European dynamic is something that runs through the entire Namur 2030 programme. Each major European policy objective is reflected in our proposed projects: a greener Europe through our ongoing focus on sustainability and the *Dolce Vita*, *Sambre 2030* and the *Responsible Digital Laboratory* projects. A more connected Europe through the *F(r)ictions* and *Table talks* projects, and our digital positioning. A more social and inclusive Europe through *Weaving the edges*, *Folklore 2.0*, *Intimacies*, *Little Connexs* and *Radical Happiness*. And a Europe closer to its people through the *Now it's our turn!*, *Playground* our *Confluence Hubs*, *Responsibility* and *Builtopia* projects.

ACTION PLAN FOR PUTTING EUROPEAN FUNDS INTO ACTION

In this regard, we used the example of Lublin 2029 as a reference. What we did was initiate a mentoring project with their team, who will support us in the coming years by sharing their experience. By the first half of 2026, all relevant sources of European funding for implementing projects and investments related to Namur 2030 will have been identified. This mapping will then enable us to draw up a list of projects that are compatible with the criteria of the various calls for proposals and to define a coordinated strategy for responding to those calls.

All of the programming partners will also be encouraged to identify and seek European funds to strengthen their capabilities and encourage the creation of new international partnerships. This identification work will be carried out in close collaboration with key players such as Europe Direct, the Creative Europe Office

Wallonia-Brussels, the International Youth Office (BIJ), the AXUD Consultation Committee, Wallonia-Brussels International (WBI), Walmeet.be and NCP Wallonia.

During the second half of 2026, an in-depth training programme will be made available to all organisations involved in Namur 2030. This programme aims to strengthen their skills in preparing submissions for the main European programmes such as Creative Europe, CERV, Erasmus+ and other relevant schemes.

From 2026 onwards, the European and International Partnership Department will implement a proactive strategy to put funding from EU programmes and other external public sources into action. Working with Belgian and European specialists, the strategy will support local operators in monitoring, preparing, submitting and monitoring the funding applications. It will also play a central role in coordinating applications, running a support network, networking at a European level and sharing best practices.

The person responsible for international relations will act as a facilitator by making the databases of international partners available and by promoting connections with other ECoCs.

European programmes identified :

- Erasmus + and the European Solidarity Corps
- Creative Europe (Culture section)
- Creative Europe (Media section)
- The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)
- Horizon Europe (Cluster Culture, creativity and inclusive society) / New European Bauhaus / EIT Culture & Creativity
- CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values)
- Digital Europe / Digital Intersection

- Interreg Europe
- Interreg NextGenerationEU
- European Funds for Digital Development
- URBACT & FSE+
- The EUNIC network, with its projects for Cluster Fund, European & Africa-Europe Spaces of Culture and Culture of Solidarity Fund – Ukraine Edition: support for our international cultural cooperation projects (Africa, Ukraine, etc.)
- The LEADER programme

European projects currently in progress:

- Contested Desires: Larnaka Constructive Dialogues. Collaboration from 2027 onwards for Congo Dynamo
- Transdisciplinary Art & Science Hubs dedicated to deepening critical thinking and media literacy A Coordination and Support Action Aligned with Horizon CL2-2025-01-Democracy-12
- Fluencies – collaboration between the Intime Festival and the Instituto Cervantes Bruselas

Q/22

ACCORDING TO WHAT TIMETABLE SHOULD THE INCOME TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE BE RECEIVED BY THE CITY AND/OR THE BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING AND IMPLEMENTING THE ECOC PROJECT IF THE CITY RECEIVES THE TITLE OF EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE?

SOURCE OF INCOME	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	FOR THE FUTURE	TOTAL (€)
EU	/	/	/	€ 0,4 M	€ 0,5 M	€ 0,7 M	€ 0,4 M	€ 2 M
National government *	/	€ 2,8 M	€ 2,8 M	€ 2,8 M	€ 2,8 M	€ 2,8 M	/	€ 14 M
Wallonia Brussels Federation *	/	€ 5,8 M	€ 5,8 M	€ 5,8 M	€ 5,8 M	€ 5,8 M	/	€ 29 M
Walloon Region *	/	€ 2,8 M	€ 2,8 M	€ 2,8 M	€ 2,8 M	€ 2,8 M	/	€ 14 M
City *	€ 0,5 M	€ 0,2 M	€ 0,3 M	€ 0,5 M	€ 0,6 M	€ 1,4 M	€ 0,5 M	€ 4 M
Province	€ 0,5 M	€ 0,5 M	€ 0,5 M	€ 0,5 M	€ 0,5 M	€ 0,5 M	/	€ 3 M
Local authorities	/	€ 0,05 M	€ 0,05 M	€ 0,1 M	€ 0,15 M	€ 0,2 M	€ 0,15 M	€ 0,7 M
BEP	€ 0,15 M	€ 0,05 M	€ 0,05 M	€ 0,05 M	/	/	/	€ 0,3 M
Total	€ 1,15 M	€ 12,2 M	€ 12,3 M	€ 12,95 M	€ 13,15 M	€ 14,2 M	€ 1,05	€ 67 M

* and €1 M allocated for infrastructure cf. Q/26

INCOME FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Q/23

FUNDRAISING STRATEGY TO SECURE SUPPORT FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE ROLE OF SPONSORS IN EVENT ORGANISATION

Namur 2030 has allocated an important role to private sector providers, not only to ensure long-term funding, but also to unite the territory around a common, sustainable project. By incorporating the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the project encourages companies to engage actively in cultural, social and environmental initiatives. In our view, they are major players involved in breaking down the barriers discussed in the previous chapters of this document. This commitment is not one-sided: by contributing financial resources, skills or premises, companies receive greater visibility, establish stronger local roots, gain more opportunities for innovation and benefit from the chance to make a positive impact on their CSR image in return. All of these are levers that can help develop their own growth.

To further reinforce this strategic positioning, a representative from the business community is an ex officio member of the Namur 2030 Executive Board.

A PROJECT SUPPORTED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

As soon as the Namur 2030 bid was launched, numerous economic stakeholders in the territory were brought into the loop and expressed their support. The *Square by New* event in June 2024 brought together more than 200 business people, while the *Meet & Greet* organised by the Provincial Economic Office, held in conjunction with the UCM, Namur Invest and *Square by New*, attracted 400 participants from the Namur business community. All had a common goal: to develop their

network and underline their commitment to Namur 2030.

More than 450 companies, businesses clubs and self-employed professionals have come forward to offer their support and promote it through their communications. In addition, over 60 leaders from the region's largest companies have signed a declaration committing to actively contribute to the preparation and success of the project, thereby confirming the willingness of the local economic fabric to get behind the candidature.

During the bid period, Namur 2030 received direct support from private companies and individuals: the provision of venues for our events, advertising services, catering, consulting, public relations, writing and contributions in kind worth a total of nearly €80,000.

A STRUCTURED STRATEGY

To give structure to this joint effort, Namur 2030 has developed a fundraising strategy with a target of raising €8 million, or 11% of the operating budget. This figure is broken down as follows:

- **63%** through patronage and sponsorship (including a business club inspired by the one in Mons 2015, with membership fees of €1 000)
- **35%** via ticketing and merchandising
- **2%** through financial products

This approach is based on the detailed segmentation of partners:

- **Official partners** (national and European): a small group of non-competing companies making a contribution of at least €1 million each (Target: €2M);
- **Project partners**, with contributions of between €50,000 and €500,000 for a specific project (Target: 10 partners for €1 M);
- **Official suppliers**, with contributions in kind in excess of €250,000 (Target: €1 M);
- **Project suppliers**, with contributions in kind of less than €250,000 (Target: €500,000);
- **The business club**: 750 businesses at €1 000 each (Target: €750,000);
- **Media partners** (in-kind support);
- **Supporters or individual contributors**, with contributions of between €20 and €200 (Target: €150,000).

This enables all of the businesses involved to commit to the project according to their means, with appropriate benefits such as visibility, participation in events or incorporation in artistic projects.

APPROPRIATE TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

To make sure this goal is achieved, Namur 2030 will include a sponsorship and resource development manager in its team from 2026 onwards. Our strategy is also based on a range of different tools:

- **Tax deductibility** through the Belgian Tax Shelter
- **Partnerships** with Prométhéa and the King Baudouin

Foundation, both leading organisations in the field of corporate philanthropy

- **Skills sponsorship**, artist residencies in companies or the creation of derivative products: special edition local drinks (Houppé, Namur Gin, Glacetrone, etc.), Namur 2030 perfume created by perfumier Nez Zen, etc.
- **Pooling/sponsorship of resources**: infrastructure, materials (in particular via the Namur Resource Centre and its European networks), employee skills, provision of a fleet of electric vehicles for transporting artists (AMG, etc.)
- **Corporate volunteering**: companies can release their employees to spend a day volunteering as part of Namur 2030. This initiative strengthens employees' civic engagement, while enhancing the company's corporate social responsibility commitments in a tangible way
- The principle of **solidarity-based contribution**: this is a system that enables those who can afford to do so to contribute to funding access to cultural events for those who are deprived of it (such as by subsidising admission costs for disadvantaged audiences, financing the hire of a bus or coach or paying for train tickets to enable young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to attend events held in Namur, etc.)
- An innovative **application** called Confluence Generator has been developed in partnership with UNamur. This is a genuine catalyst for promoting encounters between artists, academics and business owners. It also strengthens synergies between culture, science and economy. Designed to stimulate dialogue, cooperation and the emergence of innovative projects, this platform opens up new opportunities for people to work together, both locally and internationally. It is a unique model, designed in Namur, to inspire Europe.

From 2026 onwards, companies will be able to design their sponsorship and participation packages directly on the Namur 2030 website.

A STRUCTURED AND UNIFYING BUSINESS CLUB

Taking its inspiration from the successful model provided by Mons 2015 and rooted firmly in the local economic ecosystem, 'Club Entreprises Namur 2030' is currently being set up with the support of the Economic Office of The Province (BEP), Namur Invest, the Union of Middle Classes (UCM), the Cercle de Wallonie, Square by New and AKT for Wallonia. With an entry contribution of €1000, this Business Club aims to bring together 750 companies focused around a collaborative dynamic that combines sponsorship, sector-specific exchanges, artistic mentoring and shared visibility. Acting as a forum for dialogue between culture and business, the Club offers themed meetings, networking events and a digital fresco of patrons, embodying the commitment of local business to the success of Namur 2030. It will also select a representative from among its members to sit in the Board of the non-profit organisation (see Q/31).

A STRATEGY THAT TAKES THE LOCAL ECONOMIC FABRIC INTO ACCOUNT

The strategy for Namur 2030 is based on the city's economic fabric, which is made up mainly of micro-

enterprises and SMEs. While we are well aware of the importance of seeking out a few large groups of companies to create structural partnerships, we would prefer to see the formation of theme-based consortiums of local businesses united by a common sector or industry. This shared approach will enable each participant to contribute according to their capabilities, while benefiting from high overall exposure and visibility and direct involvement in the cultural events of the year. The most striking example of this collaboration is the consortium of 5 local breweries, which is currently a private partnership on a scale unseen before in the territory. This unique grouping will not only support events throughout the year of Namur being the European Capital of Culture, but will also embody a strong image of Namur as a place of skills, friendliness and living traditions.

This strategy will be extended to other key sectors, including the digital ecosystem, with the aim of building a cultural economy with strong local roots that is open to forms of skills-based sponsorship, services or shared visibility.

ACTIVE CO-CREATION OF EVENTS

As part of Namur 2030 overall, we consider our sponsors as much more than simply financial backers. We intend to see them as genuine partners who will contribute content from the very beginning of cultural projects. On 24th March 2025, on the initiative of two of these sponsors, fifty of the region's most influential business leaders came together to work with the Namur 2030 team and lay the foundations for our strategy with the private sector. This event was held in conjunction with Prométhéa, Belgium's leading authority on sponsorship and partnership in our bid.

This collaboration has given rise to a whole range of different forms of involvement: mentoring cultural projects, involvement in collective works (digital, visual, performance), hosting events or exhibitions in private or semi-public spaces (factories, offices, showrooms, etc.), collaborating on original cultural or artistic activation projects, and taking advantage

of companies' international connections to enhance our cultural partnerships.

Our sponsors are also invited to attend special events, such as galas, business evenings and themed debates. They can access VIP events and register their contributions, particularly in the Namur 2030, *Rive* and *Tribune* facilities (see Q/44).

AN OPPORTUNITY TO RETHINK HOW SPONSORSHIP WORKS

Namur 2030 aims to redefine the role played by sponsorship by establishing it as a strategic lever for promoting sustainable transformation within the area. Going far beyond mere financial support, businesses will be called on to become co-architects of the region's cultural and economic future. This approach is both collaborative and inclusive, based on various forms of sponsorship (skills, services, shared resources), as well as strong roots in the local ecosystem. By establishing a genuine 'school of patronage' as part of the Club Entreprises 2030, the aim is to raise awareness and train young generations of entrepreneurs and business leaders in how to integrate cultural practices into economic dynamics.

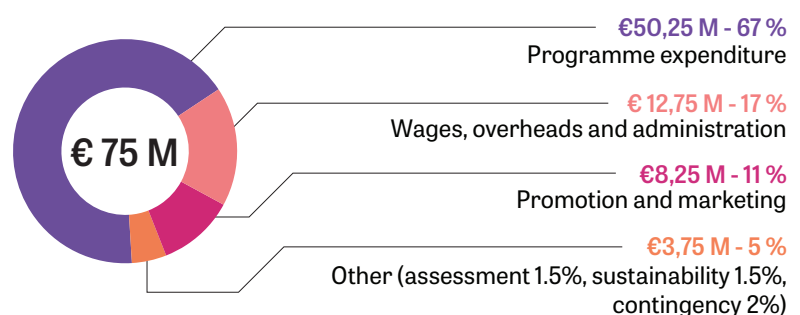
A collective sponsorship scheme has been set up in partnership with Prométhéa: each year, companies in Namur join forces to purchase a work of art, which they then donate to the City of Namur. This initiative adds to the city's artistic heritage in a long-term manner and, over time, helps to build up a cultural legacy that is accessible to everyone.

This entire chapter of the bid has been developed in close collaboration with *Open Flow* (a "co-donators" cooperative) whose role in the region is to foster a spirit of cooperation, as well as to encourage deep listening, promote trust and focus attention on new ways of doing things (a great example of 'new confluences') in the world of business. In addition, Open Flow supports us to implement initiatives that are part of the regenerative economy and the pooling of resources.

BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING EXPENDITURE

Q/24

PLEASE PROVIDE A BREAKDOWN
OF THE OPERATING EXPENDITURE



It should be pointed out that:

- expenses for the programme do not cover all of the expenses for the project as a whole. This is because part of the programme will be co-produced and therefore jointly financed with other partner cities and institutions;
- Some of the events will be held partly in institutions whose operating costs are covered independently of

Namur 2030;

- A ‘Sustainability’ chapter has been added to our ‘Other’ chapters to ensure that we meet the priorities for this objective.

These first two elements are designed to enable Namur 2030 to reduce the costs of artistic programming without compromising quality, while involving partner institutions in the project at the same time.

Q/25

PLANNED TIMETABLE FOR SPENDING OPERATING EXPENDITURE

TIMETABLE FOR SPENDING	PROGRAMME	PROMOTION AND MARKETING	WAGES, OVERHEADS AND ADMINISTRATION	OTHER - SUSTAINABILITY	OTHER - ASSESSMENT	OTHER - CONTINGENCY	TOTAL (€)
2025	€0,18 M 15,93%	€0,15 M 13,27%	€0,7 M 61,95%	/	/	€0,1 M 8,85%	€1,13 M 1,51%
2026	€1,07 M 38,42%	€0,25 M 8,98%	€1 M 35,91%	€0,175 M 6,28%	€0,04 M 1,44%	€0,25 M 8,98%	€2,785 M 3,71%
2027	€2,5 M 54,11%	€0,35 M 7,58%	€1,25 M 27,06%	€0,2 M 4,33%	€0,07 M 1,52%	€0,25 M 5,41%	€4,62 M 6,16%
2028	€6 M 66,37%	€1 M 11,06%	€1,5 M 16,59%	€0,2 M 2,21%	€0,09 M 1,00%	€0,25 M 2,77%	€9,04 M 12,05%
2029	€10,5 M 64,81%	€2 M 12,35%	€3 M 18,52%	€0,2 M 1,23%	€0,25 M 1,54%	€0,25 M 1,54%	€16,2 M 21,6%
2030	€27 M 75,90%	€4 M 11,24%	€3,75 M 10,54%	€0,25 M 0,70%	€0,275 M 0,77%	€0,3 M 0,84%	€35,575 M 47,43%
2031	€2 M 53,33%	€0,3 M 8,00%	€1,05 M 28,00%	€0,05 M 1,33%	€0,3 M 8,00%	€0,05 M 1,33%	€3,75 M 5%
Pour la suite	€1 M 52,63%	€0,2 M 10,53%	€0,5 M 26,32%	€0,05 M 2,63%	€0,1 M 5,26%	€0,05 M 2,63%	€1,9 M 2,53%
Total	€50,25 M	€8,25 M	€12,75 M	€1,125 M	€1,125 M	€1,5 M	€75 M 100%

BUDGET FOR YOUR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Q/26 & 30

WHAT IS THE BREAKDOWN OF THE INCOME TO BE RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO COVER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IN CONNECTION WITH THE TITLE YEAR?

Our ECoC is not based on an extensive programme of investments. The time for expanding infrastructure has now passed and the region already has numerous well-identified and operational facilities. The challenge is to improve the quality of life in existing structures, as well as develop their content and uses, and make them more sustainable. However, being designated as an ECoC will be the catalyst for creating a number of long-term infrastructure projects that will ensure the legacy of Namur 2030 (see Q/44).

Projects scheduled between 2025 and 2026 outside ECoC, but which will be used by Namur 2030:

- **Refurbishment of the Stade des Jeux and Théâtre de Verdure:** a listed building located at the top of the Citadel of Namur. The building will be restored to its 1910 appearance and, when finished, will resume

its central place at the heart of events on the Citadel esplanade

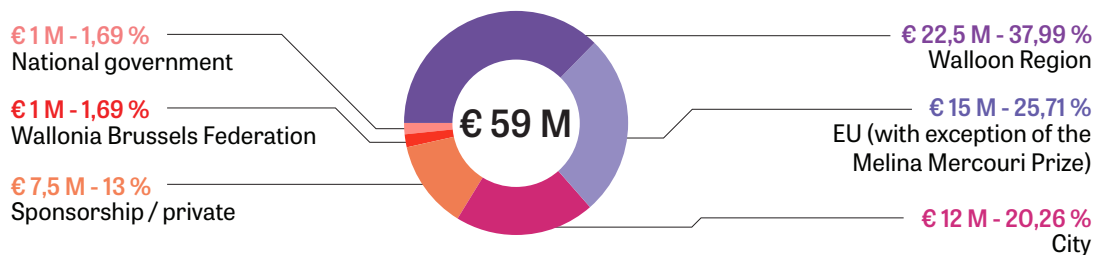
- **Extension of the pedestrianised City centre,** to create a quiet, green and welcoming town centre, which will be a great focal point during 2030, from the *Slow Opening* onwards
- **Quai des Joghiers Sambre:** a pleasant area for people to enjoy along the river Sambre
- **Creation of a floating platform** between the Pointe du Grognon and the footbridge of the Confluence

Elsewhere, three cultural infrastructure projects have been under development by local stakeholders since the approval of our the city’s strategy NCC#2 in January 2024. These infrastructures are incorporated into the Namur 2030 project:

- **Rive – a creative centre:** a separate, hybrid and multidisciplinary location dedicated to contemporary and emerging artistic creation and practices
- **Tribune – a centre of modern and contemporary art** located in Namur’s former police court building
- Enhancement and opening to the public of the Namur **Belfry**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

	NATIONAL GOVERNMENT	CITY	REGION	FWB	EU (EXCLUDING THE MELINA MERCOURI PRIZE)	OTHER (PRIVATE)	TOTAL
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THE BID AND ALREADY QUANTIFIED BECAUSE ‘CERTAIN’ OR UNDERWAY							
Stade des jeux & Théâtre de verdure Citadel	/	€5 553 445	€12 000 000	/	/	/	€17 553 445
Extension of the City Centre pedestrianised area	/	€5 193 700	€8 332 500	/	€2 230 800	/	€15 757 000
Quai des Joghiers Sambre	/	€60 773	€243 092	/	/	/	€303 865
Confluence floating platform	/	€275 650	€724 350	/	/	/	€1 000 000
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS PLANNED AND INCLUDED IN THE BID							
Rive	€500 000	€425 000	€500 000	500 000 €	8 000 000 €	€4 000 000	€13 925 000
Tribune	€500 000	€450 000	€500 000	500 000 €	5 000 000 €	€3 500 000	€10 450 000
Namur Belfry	/	€125 000	€375 000	/	/	/	€500 000
Total	€1 M	€12 M	€22,5 M	€1 M	€15 M	€7,5 M	€59 M

Income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure



Q/27

HAVE THE PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITIES (CITY, REGION, STATE) ALREADY VOTED ON OR MADE FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO COVER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE? IF NOT, WHEN WILL THEY DO SO?

At this stage, approximately 70% of the budget dedicated to infrastructure projects are secured. The main public authorities (the Federal Government, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, the Walloon Region and the City of Namur) have already confirmed their financial commitment. In addition, in order to be able to move forward quickly with the initial consolidation phases (studies, sketches, projections), the Namur 2030 Executive Board has reallocated €4 million

from the operating budget provided for in Bid Book 1 to infrastructure projects.

The remaining funding will be secured between 2026 and 2027 through three main sources: the implementation of European funds (in particular ERDF), the consolidation of private partnerships and the integration of a dedicated financial engineering profile to secure all investment plans.

Q/28

WHAT IS YOUR FUNDRAISING STRATEGY TO SEEK FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM UNION PROGRAMMES/FUNDS TO COVER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE?

The financing strategy for infrastructure related to Namur 2030 is based on consistent alignment with the priorities set by the European Union cohesion policy and is focused on an

already well-established dynamic of the territory. As a region in transition, the Province of Namur has privileged access to structural funds, in particular the ERDF, which has been identified

as the central tool for co-financing investments in cultural infrastructure. In addition, in terms of ERDF programming, the City of Namur is fully aligned with the territorial strategy developed by AXUD and is able to benefit from the support of its Consultation Committee.

With this in mind, structured consultation has been initiated with the Department for Coordination of ERDF Programmes of the Wallonia Public Service, with the aim of incorporating the needs related to Namur 2030 into European programming 2028–2035 as early as the regional priority definition phase. The aim is to ensure that the cultural intentions of the project are in line with the strategic guidelines for local territorial development in Wallonia and Europe.

This approach is in line with previous investment projects supported by the ERDF (redevelopment of the Confluence part of the town), creation of NID – Namur Intelligente et Durable (Smart, Sustainable Namur), the Enjambée footbridge, redevelopment of the Grognon), which demonstrate the ability of the City and its partners to manage

large-scale projects in line with the governance and sustainability standards required by the EU.

An expert dedicated to European infrastructure engineering will be integrated into the Namur 2030 operational team. The mission of this expert will be to structure and evaluate infrastructure projects related to cultural programming (cultural venues, shared facilities, public spaces) and to coordinate the preparation of funding applications, primarily within the framework of the ERDF, but also through complementary programmes such as URBACT, with a view to cross-financing.

This approach is also supported by the active monitoring of emerging initiatives and calls for projects, carried out in partnership with the relevant institutional and technical stakeholders (Wallonia Public Service, Walmeet, NCP Wallonia, WBI, DGEU, etc.). The entire process is based on strengthened partnership-based governance, which guarantees the soundness of financial arrangements in the medium and long term. Additional response to Q/21.

Q/29

ACCORDING TO WHAT TIMETABLE SHOULD THE INCOME TO COVER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BE RECEIVED BY THE CITY AND/OR THE BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING AND IMPLEMENTING THE ECOC PROJECT IF THE CITY RECEIVES THE TITLE OF EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE?

Source of income for capital expenditure	N-5 2025	N-4 2026	N-3 2027	N-2 2028	N-1 2029	2030 ECOC year	Further on	Total
EU	€2,2 M	/	/	€3 M	€3,5 M	€4,3 M	€2 M	€15 M
National government	/	€0,2 M	€0,2 M	€0,2 M	€0,2 M	€0,2 M	/	€1 M
Wallonia-Brussels Federation	/	€0,2 M	€0,2 M	€0,2 M	€0,2 M	€0,2 M	/	€1 M
Walloon Region	€6,10 M	€6,50 M	€6,40 M	€2,30 M	€0,70 M	€0,5 M	/	€22,5 M
City	€3,20 M	€3,20 M	€3,40 M	€1,40 M	€0,70 M	€0,1 M	/	€12 M
Sponsors	/	/	€1 M	€1,5 M	€2 M	€2 M	€1 M	€7,5 M
Total	€11,5 M	€10,1 M	€11,2 M	€8,6 M	€7,3 M	€7,3 M	€3 M	€59 M

b. Organisational structure

Q/31

WHAT KIND OF GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY STRUCTURE IS ENVISAGED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE YEAR?

The governance of Namur 2030 provides a reassuring framework for building the project independently, across party lines and over the long term. It also aims to prompt stakeholders of the territory to support and collaborate in the collective construction of the project. Our structure is separate from that of the City and its constitution pursues different objectives:

- to involve public and private partners capable of effectively managing and carrying out a project of this scale despite current and future political, budgetary and environmental uncertainties;
- to design a sustainable structure that carries forward the legacy of Namur 2030, one that is committed to the entire territory involved in the bid, one that is able to receive various types of funding, apply for various calls for projects, particularly European ones, and ensure optimum efficiency in administrative procedures;
- to ensure maximum autonomy for a highly professional team and guarantee the independence necessary to this team in order to design and implement the artistic and cultural project;
- to mobilise local stakeholders to support and

collaborate in the collective development of the project.

From 2024 onwards, the legal form of a non-profit organisation (ASBL) was chosen to lead the bid, allowing elected officials and civil society to be included and giving the team a high degree of autonomy. This ASBL reflects the values of the project and includes representatives from the public, economic, cultural and voluntary sectors, as well as youth and civil society. The ASBL's articles of association will be updated to enable it to carry out the entire project and ensure the legacy of the Capital year.

HOW ASBL NAMUR 2030 OPERATES

a. A General Meeting with 3 Colleges —

- The **College of Institutional Actors** brings together the main local authorities, all elected representatives (mayors or councillors responsible for culture) of the territory, and a number of major partners.
- The **College of Effective Members** brings together some twenty people strongly involved in Namur 2030. Their membership is validated by the Governing Board. This group is representative of all civil society forces (healthcare, education, minority groups, youth, etc.). Full members vote at the General Meeting, participate in working groups and appoint three representatives from among their number to the Governing Board.
- The **College of Conflucner Members**. In order to ensure that the entire population feels involved, this Committee brings together legal entities and private individuals who wish to support Namur 2030. Conflucner Members receive documents from the non-profit organisation and are invited to General Meetings and working groups. They do not have voting rights.

b. An Executive Board, representative and efficient —

The Executive Board is made up of **ex officio members** and **elected members**. The ex officio members are:

- The **five major authorities involved** in the project: City of Namur, Province of Namur, Walloon Region, Wallonia-Brussels Federation and the Federal State

- The **University of Namur**
- The **International Relations Office for the City of Namur** (NEW)
- A representative of the **business world** elected by the companies present in the Club Entreprises Namur 2030.

The **elected members** are:

- 3 representatives from **municipalities outside** Namur
- 3 representatives from the **College of Effective Members**.

The **Executive Board**:

- approves the appointment of the General Manager and the artistic director
- approves the reports, projects and provisional budgets presented by the General Manager
- approves the public procurement contracts amounting to more than €30 000, excluding VAT
- appoints a General Secretary whose task it is to act as the link between the Executive Board and the team
- appoints an Executive Office from its members, made up of 3 to 5 people including the Chair and a representative of the City of Namur, in charge of the day-to-day monitoring.

The Executive Board invites the General Manager, the Artistic Director, the General Secretary, the offices of the ex officio members and the head of the assessment committee to take part in its work.

The Executive Board meets effectively each month since the creation of the ASBL at the end of the summer 2024. Within the ASBL, **civil society** is extensively involved on various levels. The College of Conflucner Members enables any person or entity interested in the overall process to attend general meetings and focus groups and to receive key project documents. The College of Effective Members and the 3 members that it designates to the Executive Board enable qualified individuals who represent the diversity of the social fabric to contribute and approve the activities. Finally, the University of Namur and the business community are automatic members of the governing bodies.

Q/32

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AT A MANAGEMENT LEVEL

The team is structured around a Direction Committee comprising the General Manager, the Artistic Director responsible for the Programming department, and a General Secretary (all three of them appointed by the Executive Board), as well as the directors of the Administration, Communication, Involvement, and International departments and the head of Sustainability department.

General Manager — Chosen by the Executive Board, the General Manager has the appropriate profile to

manage a large-scale event over the long term. She has a comprehensive overview of the entire project. As the embodiment of Namur 2030, she recruits and manages the entire team and coordinates the various departments. Working closely with the Artistic Director and the General Secretary, she presents Namur 2030's activities to the Executive Board. In the case of a disagreement with the Artistic Director, the General Manager will decide what is to be presented to the Executive Board.

Artistic Director — is the coordinator of the programme and all its components. He will ensure that the projects are of a standard befitting a leading international event and that they reflect the values and strategies of Namur 2030. The Artistic Director ensures coherence and balance. The Artistic Programme department includes production, planning and the curating team.

General Secretary — The role of the General Secretary is to make sure that the decisions taken by the Executive Board are put into action. The General Secretary has an exclusive mission of management control and legality of procedures. To ensure this, he/she is also responsible for the administrative and financial team and implements the management control procedures. The General Secretary acts as the link between the team and the Executive Board. In consultation with the General Manager, the General Secretary will present provisional budgets to the Executive Board.

Europe and international partnerships department — Ensures that the European dimension is present at every level of the project. The department is also responsible for all aspects of European relations.

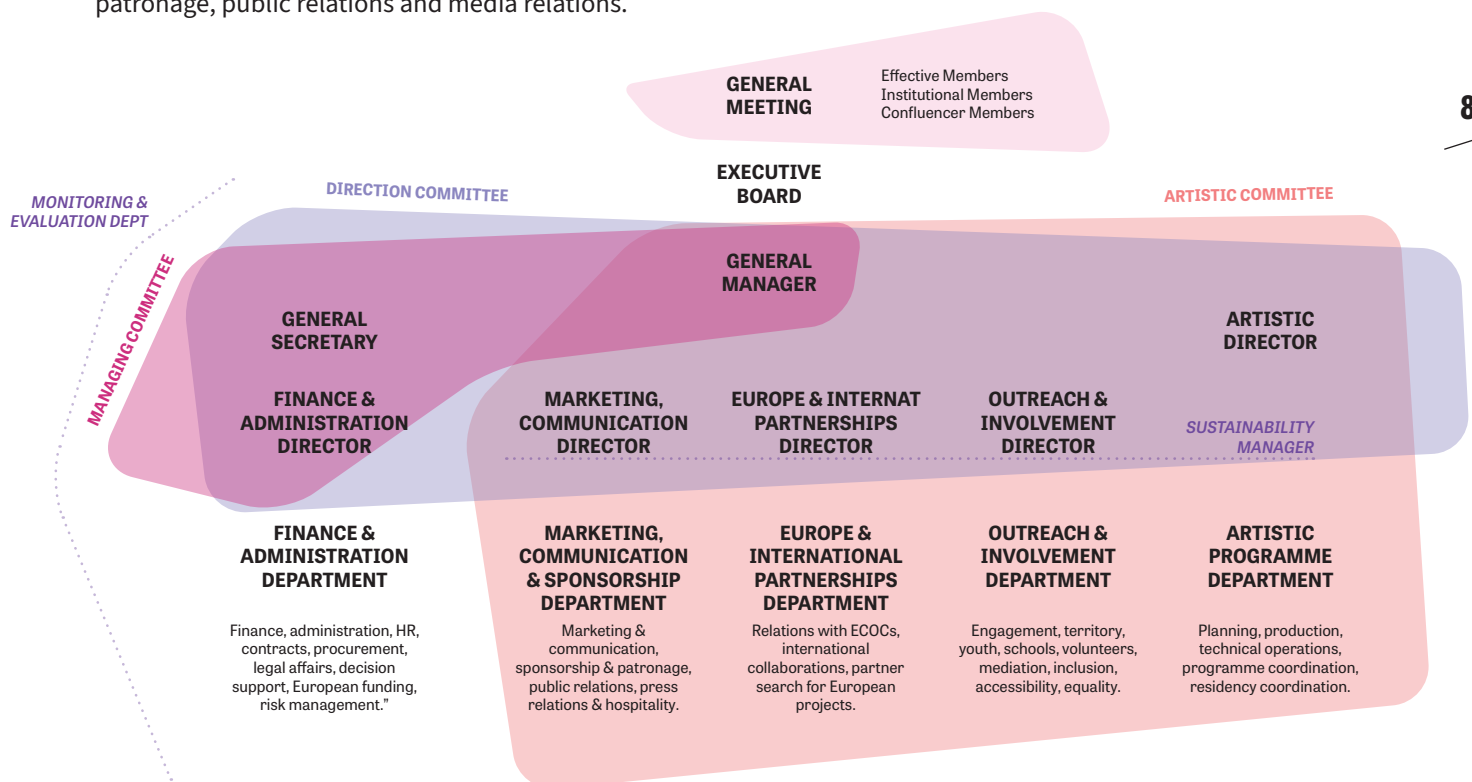
Marketing, communication and sponsorship department — This is the department responsible for marketing and communication, sponsorship and patronage, public relations and media relations.

Outreach and Involvement department — Team in charge of civil society involvement, territory, collaboration with schools, volunteer management, mediation, inclusion, accessibility and equality.

Finance and administration department — Finance, administration, HR, contracts, purchasing, legal matters, decision-making assistance, European funding, follow-up, research, risk management.

Sustainability department — A cross-functional role led by a manager who sits on the direction committee. Works directly with the City's Air, Climate and Energy Department. Draws on existing civic participation bodies, such as the Climate Advisory Council and the Air, Climate and Energy Liaison Group (GLACE), to ensure transition issues are taken into account throughout the project.

Also, the Monitoring & Evaluation Department is part of the organisation chart, but is not attached to any specific department because it operates entirely independently. Each manager is responsible for a specific budget and his/her department.



Q/33

HOW WILL YOU ENSURE THAT THIS STRUCTURE HAS THE STAFF WITH THE APPROPRIATE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE TO PLAN, MANAGE AND DELIVER THE CULTURAL PROGRAMME FOR EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROJECT?

One of the challenges this Capital has to face is in strengthening the capacity of the local and Walloon cultural sector. Our recruitment methods, project

development methods and team dynamics are the main drivers of this process.

Based on a number of meetings with various cities with ECoC experience (Mons, Lublin, Marseille, Lille), we have drawn up an initial organisational chart for the Namur 2030 team and worked on the various job descriptions.

Our team reflects the diversity without ever reducing people to a single characteristic, we ensure that we have inclusion and that equal opportunities are respected. The key lies in a policy of involvement at all levels.

No executive without understanding, but a management based on understanding the why, choosing for whom and sharing the how. A fair balance is also sought between individuals who have in-depth knowledge of the local area, junior staff, and ECoC experts who already gravitate around and within the team.

A specialised recruitment agency will also assist us in this work.

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
General Manager / Artistic Director / General Secretary	2,25	2,25	2,5	3	3	2,5	1,75
Programme	2	7	11	13	15	7	1
Marketing / communication	2	2	3	6	6	3	2
Europe / international	2	2	2	3	3	2	1
Ourteach / Implementation / Mediation / Inclusion / Local Area / Youth	2	5	6	10	10	5	1
Finance / administration / partnerships / HR	5	6	8	10	11	7	3,5
Sustainability	1	1	1,5	1,5	2	1	1
Monitoring & evaluation	1	1	1,5	1,5	2	2	1
Total (excluding work experience trainees)	17,25	26,25	35,5	48	52	29,5	12,25

In order to ensure a coherent, clear and pooled offering, reception of the public and ticketing are centralised within a dedicated department, coordinated in close collaboration with the Visit Namur organisation.

Q/34

HOW WILL YOU MAKE SURE THAT THERE IS AN APPROPRIATE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THIS STRUCTURE INCLUDING THE ARTISTIC TEAM.

The first tool for effective cooperation between local authorities and Namur 2030 is the ASBL and its decision-making bodies, which bring together all public funding bodies and civil society.

Work on this cooperation is already well underway. Cultural services, as well as those involved in urban planning, tourism, sustainable development and risk management in the various local authorities (city, province, municipalities, FWB, WBI, AWEX, DGEU, etc.) are working with the Namur 2030 team.

This cooperation is based on complementarity. Namur 2030 is part of a long-term strategy known as NCC#2. While allowing Namur 2030 freedom over its programme, guaranteed by the agreement signed between the City and the ASBL the local authorities have taken up issues of legacy and heritage to ensure that Namur remains a European Capital of Culture well beyond 2031: infrastructure linked to 2030, modelling new ways of working together, events to be continued, etc. Similarly, they are heavily involved in the assessment policy and its consequences.

Q/35

ACCORDING TO WHICH CRITERIA AND UNDER WHICH ARRANGEMENTS HAVE THE GENERAL DIRECTOR AND THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR BEEN CHOSEN - OR WILL BE CHOSEN? WHAT ARE - OR WHAT WILL BE - THEIR RESPECTIVE PROFILES? WHEN WILL THEY TAKE UP THE APPOINTMENTS? WHAT WILL BE THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS OF ACTION?

To ensure the continuity, the current team will remain in place to develop and implement the project as described in this bid.

Born in Namur, Laura Latour was first appointed as General

Commissioner of the candidature before becoming its General Manager. Our project, which places young people at its heart, needed to be led by someone capable of envisioning the future over the next three decades. With over 15 years of experience in

the cultural sector to her credit (Atelier Théâtre Jean Vilar, Ferme du Biéreau, KIKK, TRAKK, HEAJ), Laura Latour has established herself as a leading figure in the field. Her commitment at the highest level in digital matters and her leadership of KIKK, Belgium's largest digital arts festival, enables us to fully incorporate digital issues into our approach. As a visiting professor in the Creative and Digital Industries Department at the HEAJ for a number of years, Laura is in close and constant contact with the education sector and young people. Finally, she has solid European experience, having contributed to obtaining and then managing European funds for the City of Namur for the period from 2014 to 2020.

Philippe Kauffmann lived in Namur, where he developed several cultural projects over a period of nearly 10 years.

Now Artistic Director of Mons Arts de la Scène, he enjoys national and European recognition in the fields of performing arts, public arts, festive rituals and contemporary creation in general. As long-standing partner of the IN SITU network, he has been involved with ECoCs on numerous occasions: as project manager for Mons 2015 and artistic director of the Rouen-Seine-Normandie 2028 bid. His approach to managing the Namur 2030 programme, involving all local cultural stakeholders and challenging them to meet the requirements of an ECoC, like an 'editor-in-chief at the heart of an editorial committee', gives him the legitimacy he needs to finalise and implement the programme.

c. Contingency planning

Q/36 & 37

**HAVE YOU CARRIED OUT/PLANNED A RISK ASSESSMENT EXERCISE?
WHAT ARE YOUR PLANNED MITIGATING MEASURES?**

Building an ECoC requires looking far into the future. The context can change rapidly and political, economic, health, security and climate risks have all to be assessed and taken into account.

RISKS INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

Consensus and continuity are the cornerstones of our project's strength and ability to adapt. From a political perspective, stability is a major asset for the bid. At all levels of power – municipal, provincial, regional and community – there is a broad consensus in favour of Namur 2030. Furthermore, the organisational structure put in place for the project brings together all public fund-providers under a shared governance model based on the search for collective and sustainable solutions founded on common objectives. The Executive Board is also responsible for establishing mechanisms to protect the Namur 2030 project against potential political changes.

On an operational level, we have decided to keep the same team in case of winning the title of ECoC. This is in order to, among other things, capitalise on the important work carried out jointly with artists, the cultural community and civil society. We also anticipated the risks associated with financing very early on by securing the various subsidies in Bid Book 1. Our budget is based on different sources of funding and we are working to acquire strategic sponsors. If necessary, and if we were to face cuts, the team would be able to make choices and have them approved by the Executive Board without altering the main lines of the artistic programme.

With regard to infrastructure, the bid relies mainly on existing facilities, plus those scheduled for completion well in advance of the event. Any potential delay in the *Rive* or *Tribune* projects (see Q/44) would not be a problem, nor would it prevent these facilities from becoming extensions and legacies of Namur 2030.

SECURITY AND CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS

Recent years have shown that we now have to deal with events occurring that are simply unpredictable. Namur and its surrounding area (like everywhere else in Europe) are exposed to major, well-identified risks: more frequent and more intense extreme weather events, cyberattacks, terrorist acts, pandemics and armed conflicts. While the nature of the risks likely to occur for 2030 is predictable, their potential intensity remains highly uncertain. Faced with this reality, our bid draws on the proven infrastructure and expertise of the City and the Provincial Governor's Office, which have appropriate experience in risk prevention and management.

Risk analysis is on two levels:

1. Within the **municipal Security Department**, which brings together the Mayor and representatives from the emergency services, as well as the 112 call centre, the local police, hospitals and all municipal services that may be involved (works, logistics, communication, public domain, etc.).
2. Within the **provincial Security Department**, which brings together the Governor and representatives of the emergency services from across the province, federal and regional public health services, the 112 emergency call centre, the federal police, civil protection and defence services and the national crisis centre.

These two units have developed a methodology for 2030 based on an analysis of each risk identified by the BNRA (Belgium National Risk Assessment) that is linked to the event (e.g. crowd movement) or which could affect it (natural risk, accident, pandemic, etc.). From that, they have established a multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder response plan:

- A preventative plan to reduce any risks,
- A planning component, to enable a rapid response to large-scale emergencies, if necessary.

This system is adjusted over time to adapt to individual events, their scale and their specific risks.

The territory has a history of implementing similar measures: every year to support the «Fêtes de Wallonie» (more than 300 000 visitors), the Festival des Solidarités (20 000 people each day over three days) and the 2016 Européades (European folklore festival).

CONTINGENCY PLANS IN PLACE IN CASE OF FLOODING OR EXTREME HEAT

Namur 2030 has taken the decision to hold part of its programme in outdoor public spaces. We are well aware of the impacts of climate change. We are therefore implementing resilient event planning that includes fallback solutions for all outdoor events: alternative indoor venues (Namur Expo, Crealys, seasonal or permanent coverage of certain areas with mobile structures, etc.), scheduling during the off-season to avoid summer heatwaves or periods of heavy rain. Through our partnership with the Royal Meteorological Institute, we are also implementing a rapid alert and adaptation tool. Other tools, particularly for flood prevention, are available (geoapps.wallonie.be) and are used to anticipate potential disasters so that appropriate action can be taken accordingly.

As massive influx of tourists is leading to cleanliness problems, we work with Be WaPP (a non-profit organisation responsible for improving public cleanliness in Wallonia) as partner to help

us anticipate and manage these issues as effectively as possible. Based on the principles of 'Namur Safe and Secure' (integrated safety management for a safer province), the measures to reduce risks, be ready to offer an appropriate response to incidents and increase resilience are involving five steps:

- monitoring events,
- rolling out response services in the field,
- producing plans and carrying out exercises,
- partnerships with various associations,
- rising public awareness.

To ensure all events are properly monitored, one or more multidisciplinary operational command posts will be deployed to events when necessary. Motorised or foot patrols will also be on hand. A specific emergency plan allowing for rapid response has been developed and tested to train the parties involved in how the plan works. Partnerships with prevention and victim support organisations are also in place, particularly with regard to violence against women and excessive drug or alcohol consumption. Finally, the general population is made aware upstream of its role as a leading actor in security in order to reduce risks and to respond to them if an incident occurs. The same applies to artists and other stakeholders.

To oversee the entire system, coordinate, mobilise stakeholders and implement measures, a safety coordinator will be appointed. Finally, a substantial part of our project's operating costs will be allocated to anticipating and managing unforeseen events.

d. Marketing & communication

Q/38

COULD YOUR ARTISTIC PROGRAMME BE SUMMED UP BY A SLOGAN?

Together, let's create new confluences!

This slogan drives our awareness and engagement campaign launched in 2024, and will accompany us

through to 2030. It evolves alongside the project, but consistently expresses our core ambition: to imagine, build, and share — together — new ways of connecting our people, our cultures, and our ideas.

Q/39

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE SELECTION YEAR

Since the cries of joy rang out when Namur was announced as a finalist in this competition (in Brussels, at the KBR, and in Namur, at Quai 22, the cultural centre of the University of Namur, which broadcast the event), the people have really united behind the bid for Namur 2030 and are determined to win the title. How can we build on this enthusiasm? What's the best way to tell the story of this medium-sized town, the capital of struggling Wallonia and which becomes the European Capital of Culture? How can we best capitalise on the reputation of a city that may be recognised in the digital sector, but which is virtually unknown to the general public on the international stage? How do we talk about Namur's heritage? How do we turn the concept of Confluences, which

we believe in, into an inspirational brand capable of attracting millions of people? What type of message will entice people to get moving to the *Slow Opening* and for *Music Side*? How can we best support our long-term projects and participate in them? And, after all that, how can we maintain the image of a city transformed by the title of European Capital of Culture?

These are just some of the questions that are guiding our strategy and that we are rolling out here by presenting our objectives, our target audiences and a non-exhaustive list of tools that will be put in place between now and 2031. The European and international aspects of this strategy are examined in particular in Q/12.

Before that, it should be pointed out that this strategy is the result of a collective thought process as part of a working committee made up of territory communicators (local media, City, Province, Visit Namur, and the Namur Cultural Centre, as well as the local police, the Province's Economic Office, communication agencies, etc.). Our practices are also well established in *Digital Change with Ethics*, an event launched by TRAKK, KIKK and Spade, which led us to draw up a charter for the communicators of Namur 2030 and partners, initiating a laboratory for responsible communication practices.

A CHARTER FOR OUR COMMUNICATION

The Namur 2030 communication strategy is in line with the overall artistic strategy of Namur 2030. It is based along three main lines set out in a **responsible communication charter** aimed at our communicators, those in the territory with whom it is co-written and European partners with whom it is challenged.

These three main lines are:

- **sustainability**: measuring the impact of our actions, reducing our carbon footprint, eco design and

- responsible hosting, optimising digital communication, using artificial intelligence and producing printed materials in a responsible manner, etc.;
- **ethics**: combating bias and misinformation in conjunction with the *True stories* festival, where we run workshops on social media literacy, transparency in data processing and compliance with privacy requirements, the use of free software, and a “Slow Communication” policy designed to fight compulsiveness in our practices, in line with our *Slow Opening* and with our strategy of soft mobility and slow tourism, etc.;
- **accessibility**: working with expert organisations, compliance with WCAG standards on digital accessibility, combating the digital divide, multilingual support with thoughtful automated translation, respectful customisation of media, with specific measures for people with visual impairments, hearing impairments, reduced mobility or cognitive difficulties, working with the audiences concerned in their development, etc.

1. OBJECTIVES

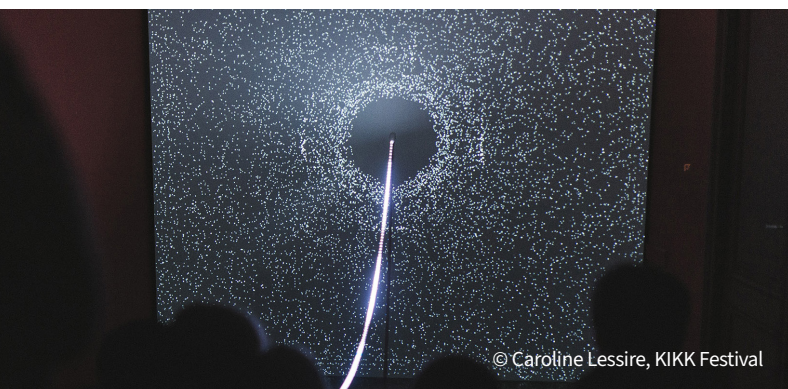
- **2025-2028** : Ensure general awareness of the project (explain what a European Capital of Culture is, describe the project, its vision and values, establish its brand image) and mobilise key players (territory project, creation of a participating community, etc.)
- **2028** : Specifically inform and mobilise tourism operators
- **2029** : Reveal the concept and the programme, inform people and encourage them to want to make the trip to the event

— 2030 :

- **2031** : Communicate the legacy and inspire people to return to Namur in 2030.

2030

- **Ensure awareness** promote the ECoC project, its vision, values and purpose to as many people as possible and create an enthusiastic and consistent perception of the project;
- **Mobilise** (creating confluences of!) the driving forces: encourage people to join in, get involved and be included, and create a genuine, active community of ‘Confluencers’ who are an integral part of Namur 2030;
- **Get people to visit our territory**: draw attention to the highlights of the programme and encourage as many people as possible to attend;
- **Guarantee the large-scale participation of a variety of audiences** of all ages, lovers of art or simply people interested in what is happening, in groups or individually – and to do so as an audience or co creators, or as national and international visitors;
- **Guide people around once they arrive by way of good signage** of locations and useful contacts;
- **Provide assistance for specific audiences** by ensuring there is easy access to all forms of information, at all times, for as many people as possible;
- **Showcase the legacy**: celebrate the year’s achievements, keep records, pass on the practices developed during the ECoC year and serve as a model for other cities to emulate.



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2. AUDIENCES

As preparations progress, we will be reaching out to different audiences in concentric circles, starting with the local population, who were the first to be involved when the bid was originally submitted. Over the years, and until

2030, the general public will be added and the scope will be broadened.

We have identified priority audiences and associated

areas:

- The people of Namur
- The 500 000 inhabitants of the project territory (Namur + region)
- The general public

(Belgium + Surrounding countries)

- Culture lovers and people interested in the future of Europe (Namur + region + Belgium + Surrounding countries + Europe + International)

3. TOOLS

We have chosen our tools with the focus on producing high-quality, targeted, inclusive content that is enriched by the diversity of perspectives and collective creativity. We have done this while managing the social and environmental impact of our digital presence and physical productions through thoughtful production.

GENERAL PUBLIC TOOLS

— **Press conferences and trips**, via journalists, reach the general public. There will be three, or at most four, key moments between mid-2029 and the end of 2030 when communication campaigns will be launched and, prior to that, the programme itself will be unveiled.

— **Confluence Points** reach the general public directly, with no intermediaries. Each month, the local people are invited to attend these sessions so that they can find out everything they need to know about Namur 2030, how they can become involved and how they can become Confluencers.

— **The Quarterly** will be the main printed tool for the general public. It will be distributed all over Belgium.

— **The printed monthly publication** will provide communication to the general public in the territory. Distributed across several hundred locations identified by the Namur 2030 colours, it will act as a monthly cultural calendar and a local information resource. This monthly publication/diary will be produced by a mixed team: members of the Namur 2030 Communications Department and students from the Escale school at the Saint Martin psychiatric hospital in Dave (Namur). Its production will rely on careful artistic coordination, both in terms of editorial content and graphic design. It will also benefit from the educational support of the Escale school's teachers, who are already involved in similar editorial projects on a smaller scale. This hybrid newspaper will combine informative content with space for free expression. It will be complemented by a podcast produced with the professional support of an artist-host. With its own sensitive and unique editorial line, this podcast will draw inspiration from other well-known formats, such as Radio Chevauchoir and Le Papotin.

— **The website** is the shop window for Namur 2030, with search engine optimisation in operation from now onwards. The site features information about what an ECoC is and generates visibility for the European Union (Q/42). It also provides practical information and provides a centralised diary of events covering multiple criteria. The site includes a news segment including podcasts, infographics, videos and a highly visible tab inviting visitors to register for the newsletter. An app version of the site is also planned.

— **Centralised ticketing**, although not a communication tool as such, it is essential for the services offered both on our website and at a designated location in the city. Not yet in place right across the territory, it will be implemented with a test phase in 2029 and will be fully operational by the end of 2029. The ticketing service will enable the public to book Namur 2030 events and organise their travel. This service will be an important legacy of the ECoC.

— **The Namur 2023 newsletter** already has a significant database in place. The newsletter is a tool that is working well at the present time and which we will continue to use to provide information. It is, in fact, the digital version of our *Confluences Points* mentioned above.

— **Social networks (SN)** appear at this stage to be a must-have tool for attracting the attention of broad audiences. But the EU is aware that social networks are not without ethical, fundamental rights or environmental issues. Examining the place of social media is also on the programme of the *True Stories* festival. As social media are currently undergoing great scrutiny and may be subject to rapid changes, it is difficult to put forward a definitive strategy that will still be valid for them in 2030. So, at this stage, all we can say is that we will use SN to boost our online presence, although our use of it will be approached in a thoughtful manner, led by a multi-generational team trained in the ethical and environmental issues of digital technology, as detailed in our charter.

— **Influence marketing** will be based on recruiting experts and specialist agencies, both Belgian and European. This will ensure that we can take an approach that is innovative, ethical and adapted to territorial and European realities. In particular, we will highlight the participation of local 'Confluencers' and our artists as genuine opinion leaders. We will offer them specific support to embody the spirit of confluence that is unique to Namur 2030, thereby strengthening the visibility and European roots of the project in the long term.

— **Communication channels requiring payment** provided by advertising space (Namur and Belgian and international towns and cities according to the strategy established with Visit.Wallonia), the Belgian public transport networks (STIB, TEC, DE LIJN, SNCB) and their foreign counterparts (Eurostar, OUIGO, Deutsche Bahn, etc.) will be given priority. Media buying in traditional media outlets will be supported by a comprehensive strategy that benefits from strong media partnerships from local to international (Q/40), and media buying on social media will adhere to the guidelines set out above for social media.

— **Signage and visual presence in town** will be reviewed at the scale of the entire project territory and will also support participatory artistic projects, such as sensitive mapping

(*Dolce Vita*). The design of this presence is simplified to ensure accessibility and ease of navigation. Within a 100 km radius of the city, the numerous cycle routes leading to Namur are incorporated into partner route planning apps (Fietsknoop, Komoot, Strava, Geovelo, etc.). With the support of this structured network, we will facilitate travel throughout the territory, particularly by promoting access to the *Confluence Hubs* (see chapter 4).

SPECIFIC TOOLS

— **Physical presence** will complement printed material. In the run-up to 2030, we will be present with Confluencers out in the streets, markets, shops, university campuses, at our partners' events, at major trade fairs and at the main events organised in Namur and the surrounding area. In 2030, the Namur 2030 sites will enable us to provide real-time information to local people and tourists alike via trained reception agents. It should also be noted that in 2030, town criers will be out sharing the highlights of the programme, enabling them to reach people who cannot read or write, or who have limited literacy skills.

— **Educational files and specific materials for those unable to attend** will be produced in coordination with the Engagement Unit throughout the year.

— **The collaborative platform** is the space dedicated to Confluencers from the website or from the app facilitating networking. The platform itself will evolve to suit the needs

of the various participatory projects and will help with the creative and artistic cooperation detailed in Q/05 and, more generally, will support the way engagement in Namur 2030 is organised.

— **The physical and digital communication kit** will be made available to our partners and the general public overall. Logo, email signature, generic publications for digital. Brochures, flyers, roll-up banners, beach flags and sundry goodies, produced for physical communication.

PARTNER TOOLS

— **The communication tools of our partners across the territory** will be fundamental in building the Namur 2030 brand, which is relatively new at the scale of the territory. From the very beginning of the bid process, Namur 2030's communication has been organised in conjunction with the City, the Province, cultural operators, local tourist offices, Visit.Wallonia, the local police, the Namur retailers' association and our network of partner companies and their various contacts. This is to create a central focus and maximise the message's reach among the general population (Q/41). In 2029-2030, our network of communicators will be working exponentially on the project, using all of their own tools.

— **The communication tools of our partners in Europe and internationally** will be coordinated with the strategic support of VISITWallonia and are detailed in Q/12.

Q/40

PLEASE DESCRIBE THE PARTNERSHIPS PLANNED OR ESTABLISHED WITH MEDIA WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING WIDE COVERAGE OF THE EVENT.

In order to ensure extensive and diversified media coverage of the event, we have designed a **strategy for relations with journalists** based on editorial content and customised work with journalists. This strategy is structured around the successive phases described in our communication objectives and will be punctuated, starting in 2029, by the unveiling of the programme and, in 2030, by the calendar of artistic events.

Working with the help of an agency that specialises in international matter, **our approach** is:

- **territorial** for the general media, targeting the regional, national and international media with relevant proposals, not forgetting the pool of European and international media correspondents based in Brussels (Q/12);
- **theme-based** with regard to the cultural, tourist, lifestyle, women's, feminist, urban culture, green, engaged, digital, business, diplomatic, political media, etc.

We are also in the process of developing a **strategy of media partnerships** involving agreements signed by both parties. For the **regional press**, we already have strong partnerships in place with:

- Boukè, local Namur television station, which resulted in the production and broadcast of a two-part, 26-minute

documentary retracing the history of the bid during the selection phase. Then there's the creation of weekly formats designed specifically for social media and to reach young audiences. The schemes will be expanded and will be able to closely monitor the dynamics of the *Little Connexes*.

- Contacts are underway with Matélé (in the south of the province) and Canal Zoom (Gembloux) so that we can set up similar structural partnerships with special live broadcasts of major events, as well as a weekly segment on the television news, a monthly feature about the *Confluence Hubs*; exchanges of visibility; involvement in the *True stories* festival and, more specifically in the media literacy workshops, etc.; Given the strong presence of local television stations throughout Wallonia, these partnerships are an important guarantee that Namur 2030's messages will be relayed to a significant part of the local population.
- Next, with the newspapers in the L'Avenir group (the newspaper with the largest circulation in French-speaking Belgium) and more specifically with its Namur edition (which covers the entire province). This group was one of the companies that was quickest to express its willingness to partner with Namur 2030. The agreement provides for exposure in the pages of the newspaper, on its website and in the city through mobile devices, as well as a joint presence at events in the territory, special editions of the newspaper from now until 2031, special

supplements in 2030 when the communication campaign is launched and the inclusion of our monthly magazine in the newspaper as an insert, etc.

We are also progressing in the **national media**.

- We are working closely with RTBF, which is awaiting the official designation of the ECoC city before taking a position on the signing of an agreement. The various discussions underway include: a major exhibition **Our Folklore, Our Roots** at the Stade des Jeux, based on decades of television archive material; coproduced documentaries on cultural, historical, heritage, tourism, youth and digital themes, as well as focusing on the dynamic of artistic co-creation or the strategy for territorial development; portraits following the ten artists from *Rocket* project over a period of several years; documentaries about artistic creation, such as the coproduction of *Action*; discussions about media literacy at the RTBF's Namur Media Centre and in

partnership with *True stories*; special editions and live broadcasts of highlights; monthly or weekly programmes; all tailored to the group's seven brands on radio, television and online.

- In the print media, discussions are focusing on visibility, as well as special sections and projects by guest artists acting as Editor in Chief, invited to coordinate a special edition of the newspaper. All of this begins in 2029.

We have initiated contacts in the **international media**.

- France Télévisions has a regional station (Hauts de France) which has been contacted as a potential partner. Euronews has also been approached, while contacts with Arte will be formalised under the same conditions and deadlines as with RTBF.
- We should emphasise in particular that the bulk of the strategy regarding international media will focus on press relations rather than partnerships (Q/12).

Q/41

HOW WILL YOU MOBILISE YOUR OWN CITIZENS AS COMMUNICATORS OF THE YEAR TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD?

Between 2024 and 2029, we will be working on this issue through education and collective commitment —

The first condition for success in this area is establishing a deep understanding of the challenges, meaning, values and benefits of Namur 2030. That is why, together with the Engagement Unit, our communication and public relations will focus primarily on educating people about the concept of Confluence and European values. We will concentrate on co-creation campaigns that encourage people to share their ideas and experiences (digital travel diaries within their own city, mini-polls, short video opinion clips). We will also be organising creative competitions and specific collections, such as for the *Intimacies* exhibition, for which we are looking for clues (miscellaneous items, photos, letters, etc.) relating to the lives of elderly homosexual people in the territory.

Of course, cultural operators, the voluntary sector, the sporting world and businesses are all channels for reaching their own audiences and building legitimacy around Namur 2030. All of this will be amplified by a widely distributed communication kit, as well as by the visual presence of Namur 2030 in everyday locations and throughout the city, and more broadly by the overall communication strategy. Supported by print and digital media, pride in belonging becomes viral, fuelled by inclusive visual campaigns, collective narratives and shared highlights.

In 2029-2031, we will be getting the message across through emulation, gamification and empowerment —

Namur 2030 will be relying increasingly on its artistic projects as they take shape, particularly the ones that are more open and involve more audience participation: a big flash-mob for *Slow Opening*, a blog dedicated to *Action*, specific support materials (posters, flyers, stickers, etc.) for *Little Connexits* and *Confluence Hubs*, a newsletter dedicated to *Forum Folklore* in partnership with the

City, long-term reports about the citizen sponsors of *Responsibility* and about the artists participating to *Rocket*, a symbolic object for the children of *Dolce Vita*, a Swiss Army knife adapted for those appearing in *Playground*, stickers made from recycled paper for the participants in *Builtopia*, etc. The aim is to encourage feelings of shared fun and enjoyment, collective intelligence, belonging and the pleasure of working together.

The aura of Namur 2030 is based primarily on a volunteer strategy designed as a living network operating on a number of different levels. The Confluencers will be the first to create a sense of emulation that will inspire everyone to become a **Confluencer** in their own right. The aim is to encourage a bottom-up dynamic in which everyone co-creates content for sharing their experiences and getting others involved and embodying the spirit of confluence.

Beyond the Confluencers and our partners' audiences, the aim is to establish a foundation of people who identify with the Namur dynamic and who are truly committed to the project. These people are local retailers, taxi drivers, craftspeople, restaurateurs, staff at the service desks of the local authority, librarians or hairdressers – hundreds of people with whom to create a dialogue on the ground, will be involved through fieldwork carried out in close collaboration with the Involvement and Inclusion Department, which ensures that cultural rights are fully respected in projects such as *Weaving the edges* and the *Little Connexits*.

A specific strategy is being implemented in schools, from primary school to university, with a particular focus on NEETs (i.e. people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training). Getting students actively involved is a gradual process and is based on the plan implemented

in conjunction with UNamur and the high schools. Details about the *Now it's our turn!* programme are provided in chapter 4.

The way in which we intend to attract European and international audiences is detailed in Q/12.

Q/42

HOW DOES THE CITY PLAN TO HIGHLIGHT THAT THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE IS AN ACTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION?

The EU is a central part of it all.

Since the first bid, we have systematically used the “European Capital of Culture” baseline in all our documents (digital, printed, exposure at events, etc.) and verbally in all our statements (*Points of Confluences*, relations with the media, citizen meetings, appointments with partners, tourism, etc.).

We have developed informative storytelling that is focused on the history of ECoCs and European values to raise awareness among the public in Namur. This is a significant part of our current work. We share this information on all our media channels and outputs and at all our B2B and B2C meetings.

We are also encouraging the stakeholders of the European institutions to stage their working events in the territory. Formal invitations to various international delegations have been sent out, as is the case for the «Fêtes de Wallonie».

Following the designation, we will publish an educational guide based on age groups, which will be sent out to all schools and high schools. This guide will talk about ECoCs, about Namur 2030 in particular and about the role that young people can play in the adventure.

The European flag will be displayed at various key locations, alongside the Belgian flag, such as at the Town Hall and at Namur railway station. We are using the key date of Europe Day to offer a tour of the European quarter in Brussels to discover ‘Europe differently’, with Namur residents who work in the European institutions acting as guides to help us discover ‘their’ EU.

We will communicate with targeted audiences about the measures put in place by the EU for its citizens. Among young people, through UNamur and the Namur Academic Hub, we will capitalise on the success of the Erasmus and Erasmus+ programmes and our active involvement in other international programmes and networks. For artists, we will facilitate access to cultural policy support programmes with a view to capacity-building (see Q/10).

As 2030 approaches, storytelling to foster a greater sense of belonging to the EU in people’s minds will be developed through emotional content taking the form, for example, of portraits of local residents or artists. This could be a central part of our message in 2029.

In 2030, a number of artistic projects will specifically address our shared membership of the EU, which we will be sure to highlight in an original and visually appealing communication aimed at both local and international audiences. We will stage European citizenship workshops in schools and through the *Little Connexits* programme.

We will also dedicate specific promotional time (particularly in the media) to other ECoC of 2030 to boost their visibility within our organisation and foster a sense of shared belonging.

After the event, we will deliberately link the success of the ECoC to the EU. Through the Namur Cultural Observatory’s communications, we will demonstrate how Namur can inspire other cities in the EU.

KEY FIGURES NAMUR 2030 TERRITORY

 CULTURE	 MOBILITY	 TOURISM & ACCOMMODATION												
13 museums 20 cultural centres 20 creativity and expression centres 16 screening rooms/cinemas/film clubs 32 folk groups 11,274 historical monuments 1 higher school of arts 12 art academies 5 theatres + 72 amateur troupes 30 bookstores 19,000 higher education/university students 2 universities 4 graduate schools 33% woodland 128 protected natural sites 294 schools and 7 youth centres	2,100 km of marked cycling routes +1,000 shared bikes & scooters Train: Liège & Charleroi 30 min, Brussels <1h (41 trains per day), Paris 2h47 (23 trains), Amsterdam 3h30 (34 trains), Berlin 6h42 (10 trains), London 4h (10 trains) Bus: 305 lines, 31 to towns and cities in Wallonia Coaches: 22 dedicated parking spaces Cars: 39,000 parking spaces 3 marinas, 1 day from Antwerp and Dunkirk 1 cable car (180,000 visitors/year) Intersections of 2 major motorways Located at the centre of a triangle formed by 3 international airports	Hotels, campsites, holiday cottages: <table><tr><th></th><th>Units</th><th>Beds</th></tr><tr><td>Namur city</td><td>141</td><td>2383</td></tr><tr><td>N30 territory</td><td>1522</td><td>28 690</td></tr><tr><td>Wallonia</td><td>8294</td><td>147 419</td></tr></table> +8,000 usable second homes (+35,500 beds) +17,000 pleasure boats hosting 175,000 passengers/year 48 tourist attractions, +3.3 M visitors/year, +1.5 M overnight stays Event expertise: multiple events attracting over 250,000 visitors 2,165 retail and hospitality outlets, including 430 restaurants		Units	Beds	Namur city	141	2383	N30 territory	1522	28 690	Wallonia	8294	147 419
	Units	Beds												
Namur city	141	2383												
N30 territory	1522	28 690												
Wallonia	8294	147 419												

06

Capacity
to deliver

Q/43

EVIDENCE OF THE CONTINUED POLITICAL SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT OF THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES.

A CLEAR, LONG-TERM AND STRUCTURED POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Our bid for European Capital of Culture is based on a strong, consistent, across-the-board political commitment that unites all levels of power and all political parties. The City of Namur, which initiated the project, has provided nearly unanimous support across all political divides within its City Council. This favourable vote demonstrates a strong political commitment to delivering an ambitious and promising project for the future. Since the beginning of this adventure, teams from both the City and the Province have been available to support Namur 2030 in promoting the bid, approaching partners and sharing their expertise (culture, youth, participation, data, roads, mobility, infrastructure, economic fabric, tourism, accessibility, inclusion, etc.). Communication has been consistently smooth and regular between the City and Provincial departments and the Namur 2030 team. This is thanks, in particular, to the appointment of a dedicated contact person for the bid in each institution.

In February 2025, Mr Maxime Prévot was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, becoming ‘Bourgmestre empêché’ (Mayor in absentia) of Namur. At the same time, Ms Charlotte Bazelaire, delegate for cultural affairs, was selected to act as Interim Mayor. Since then, work on the bid has continued apace, with weekly meetings between the team and the Mayor to review the progress of the project. In addition, all of the political authorities take part in the ASBL’s meetings of the Executive Board.

Political figures of the territory — The ASBL, i.e. the non-profit organisation behind the bid, was created in July 2024 and is the result of an unprecedented collaboration between the main political players in the region: the City and the Province, but also the Economic Office of the Province of Namur (BEP), the University of Namur and the Governor of the Province. In addition, the 38 municipalities of the territory have agreed to join the association, to contribute a symbolic membership fee and appointing to the general meeting entry fee and to appoint a representative to the General Meeting

Walloon Region, Wallonia-Brussels Federation and Federal Government — All higher levels of authority were officially approached and met with the bid committee and the Mayor, and later the Acting Mayor of Namur. The following undertakings were made:

- The **Federal Government**, through the Council of Ministers, took the decision on 17th May 2024 to ask the National Lottery to set aside €3 million per year over five years (2026-2030) for the Belgian city that wins the title of European Capital of Culture;
- The Government of the **Wallonia-Brussels Federation** voted to support Namur’s bid at its meeting of 23rd August 2024, allocating a total amount of €30 million;
- The **Walloon Region** agreed to support the city’s candidacy for Namur 2030 at its meeting on 22nd August 2024, voting to allocate a total of €15 million. It tasked the Minister of Local Government to implement the decision;
- The **City of Namur** voted to grant a subsidy on 28th January 2025 (€500 000 for 2025) and on 3rd June 2025, an agreement in principle was reached to grant a subsidy of €4.5 million to be spread over the period from 2026 to 2032, making €5 million in total;
- The **Province of Namur** voted to support the project to the tune of €3 million at the Provincial Board meeting held on 24th June 2024;
- The **Business Office for the Province of Namur** approved its contribution

to the project at the meeting of the Board of Directors on 18th June 2024 for a total amount of €300,000.

In addition to their financial support, the commitment of the public authorities of the City and the Province, as well as the Business Office for the Province is also reflected by their presence at the Board of the non-profit organisation and their support with involving

local stakeholders. To this end, a College of Institutional Actors has been set up within the non-profit organisation to ensure closer coordination between the political authorities of the territory and the operational management of the ECoC.

Q/44

PROGRESS OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS PLANNED AT THE PRE-SELECTION STAGE

As stated before, our bid is not based on a large-scale construction programme for infrastructure. As a result of the more than €100 million invested over the past ten years, more than 13 cultural venues have already been created or renovated, and five major projects will be completed by 2029. The City of Namur therefore has a solid infrastructure network in place that is ready to host the European Capital of Culture year. Nevertheless, certain needs remain: the creation of a space dedicated to rehearsals and residencies for artists from both the local and international communities; the opening to the public of the Belfry, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and the establishment of a Centre for Modern and Contemporary Art.

STADE DES JEUX AND THÉÂTRE DE VERDURE OF THE CITADEL

The Stade des Jeux and the Théâtre de Verdure, located at the summit of the Citadel of Namur, form an outstanding architectural ensemble inaugurated in 1910. Designed by architect Georges Hobé, this complex consists of two separate areas. On one side is the Stade des Jeux, a stadium with covered terraced seating. It can accommodate up to 4 000 spectators and overlooks a vast esplanade that can host a whole range of different types of events. On the other side, the Théâtre de Verdure is an open-air amphitheatre with a capacity of around 2 800 seats. These facilities, listed as exceptional heritage sites in Wallonia, are currently being restored to preserve their historical and cultural value.

LINKS WITH THE ECOC

Folklore 2.0, Builtopia Camping Europa, Radical Happiness

STATE OF PROGRESS

Work is currently underway and will be completed by the end of 2027.

EXTENSION OF THE PEDESTRIANISED AREA IN THE CITY CENTRE

In response to a public consultation conducted in 2021, the City of Namur launched a participatory process for the extension of the pedestrianised area, by creating a monitoring committee in 2022. The aim is to build a peaceful, green and friendly city centre, enhancing the area's attractiveness, quality of life, local commerce, soft mobility and air quality.

LINKS WITH THE ECOC

overall setting for events planned in the public spaces, in particular *Slow Opening* and *Radical Happiness*.

STATE OF PROGRESS

work scheduled to be completed at the end of 2027.

QUAI DES JOGHIERS AND CONFLUENCE FLOATING PLATFORM

Creation of a leisure area along the river Sambre and a floating platform between the Pointe du Grognon and the Footbridge of Confluence. Objective: to gently redesign the banks of the rivers Meuse and Sambre to create genuine places for living, discovery and relaxation, accessible to all.

LINKS WITH THE ECOC

Overall setting for events planned in the public spaces, including in particular *The Grand Puzzle Parade*

STATE OF PROGRESS

Work scheduled to be completed at the end of 2028

OPENING TO THE PUBLIC OF THE UNESCO HERITAGE-LISTED BELFRY

The Belfry of Namur is a precious historical relic whose ambivalent past (as a fortification tower and belfry) adds to its appeal. It is one of the only belfries recognised by UNESCO which, to this day, is not open to visitors and has not been highlighted in any way in its interior. There is huge tourist demand for this. The City of Namur aims to promote its belfry as a cultural space.

LINKS WITH THE ECOC

Slow Opening, Mystery Meetings and inclusion in the tourist circuits in 2030.

STATE OF PROGRESS

Programming note finalised, agreement from the region via the General Commission for Tourism for 75% co-financing of the work. The work will be completed by the end of 2029.

RIVE CREATIVE CENTRE

Namur intends to fill a structural gap in its cultural ecosystem by creating a hybrid multidisciplinary space dedicated to contemporary and emerging artistic practices. The *Rive Creative Centre* will be a space for artistic production, exhibition and interaction, where different artistic disciplines can engage in dialogue in a stimulating environment that opens on to the city. As the physical extension to the *Rocket* artistic project, *Rive* aims to provide structure and **body to**

the local artistic scene, while at the same time providing guidance to artists on their professional journeys.

Designed as a flexible laboratory, *Rive* is based on a raw aesthetic and bold architecture, inspired by European models such as La Condition Publique (Roubaix), El Hangar (Barcelona), Le Centquatre (Paris) and Uferstudios (Berlin). *Rive* is closely connected to Trakk, Namur's creative hub, to provide a space where creativity can flourish in a dynamic of innovation, while promoting digital partnerships across multiple sectors. *Rive* supports artists in residence using tools designed to make art more professional while promoting environmental sustainability. The centre covers a wide range of disciplines: from contemporary music to dance, visual arts and new urban practices.

With 5 000 m² located on the banks of the river Sambre, the site houses studios, offices, permanent workshops for artists and collectives, shared workshops, a performance space, a bar and social area, outdoor spaces and residences in a partially listed heritage setting. The aim here is not to build something new, but to reinvest in something that already exists, applying standards of reuse and sustainability throughout all phases of the work. The site operates on a shared governance model, involving artists, partners and managers, brought together in a cooperative structure that guarantees the flexibility and collective intelligence necessary for the life of a vibrant, inclusive cultural venue with a strong European focus.

LINKS WITH THE ECOC

The *Rocket* project lays the foundations for this practical space, which is intended to be the main infrastructure legacy of Namur 2030. The *Rocket* meets a need clearly identified in NCC #2. It will not be finalised for the beginning of 2030. The first artistic residencies will be hosted in Jambes, at the former Carmel de la Sainte-Famille monastery belonging

to UNamur. It is a place brilliantly conducive to creativity (gardens, beehives, accessible on foot from Namur) which serves as a prototype for the *Rive* centre.

STATE OF PROGRESS

The project was initiated in collaboration with the Business Office for the Province, with a documentation and design phase. The start of the project depends on obtaining funding, which is supported in particular by the ERDF 2028-2035.

TRIBUNE – CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Along the same lines as several European cities such as Bilbao, Amsterdam, Metz, Lille, Lens, Nantes, Marta-Herford, Tallinn and Oslo, Namur has ambitions to create an iconic contemporary art centre. Called *Tribune* (named after Namur's former police court, a symbolic building earmarked to accommodate the venue), the centre is a lively, inclusive and committed venue, created as the result of consultation with local stakeholders. More than just a museum, the *Tribune* Centre aims to break down barriers between artistic practices and place artists' voices at the heart of public debate.

Like the Tripostal contemporary arts centre in Lille, *Tribune* is developing a bold programme combining exhibitions, workshops and mediation, linked to major contemporary issues. Managed by the City, this project may see the light of day in early 2029, subject to funding.

LINKS WITH THE ECOC

A legacy project of Namur 2030 that meets a need that the City has been working on since 2015.

STATE OF PROGRESS

Project currently being consolidated. The actual implementation of the project is subject to obtaining the necessary funding, in particular from the ERDF 2028-2035 fund.

What if the future of Europe were shaped in Namur?

Last March, in the United States, a list of words was compiled and disseminated prohibiting government agencies, researchers and companies from working on any topics represented by these words. The document you have just read uses most of these proscribed words and repeats several of them with a certain obstinacy. And if Namur becomes European Capital of Culture, there is no doubt that the word *Confluences* will be added to this now-famous list.

Because we are sending out a message from the heart of Wallonia that we believe to be crucial. A message of encounter at any cost. Whether it's on an individual or collective level, whether it involves questioning the diffuences between yesterday and tomorrow, or the boundaries between spaces or what is supposed to distinguish us as human beings, *Confluences* is a bold, responsible and necessary undertaking.

Confluences involves a territory of 500,000 people who stand ready to write and share a different story. It won't always be easy as the polarisations are real. But we are determined to move forward along what is a decidedly different path. The path of openness, of listening, of mutual understanding, the fruit of which is the Culture we produce. Whether it's between individuals, or generations or even sectors, our promise is to overcome the hurdles to create the most transversal European dialogues. We will make our best to do so.

What about you?

THANK YOU

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed, in any way, big or small, to this extraordinary adventure. Thank you to everyone who has been involved from the very beginning and who has supported the project right up to the moment our bid was submitted. Thank you to the people who live in the territory, to those involved in the cultural, educational, social and economic spheres of our particular world, to the associations and private partners who have become involved and to all the institutions and teams committed to working alongside us.

Thank you, one and all. Thank you for bringing your ideas to the table to enhance our bid. And thank you for your constructive critiques, your energy and your enthusiasm. Together, we have dreamt, designed, questioned, nurtured and constructed this project to become European Capital of Culture. And this is only the beginning.

The Namur 2030 Team:

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