

# European Capitals of Culture

What do we know? How do we know it?

40 years of data, soundbites & evaluation

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**What we know...**

# 85 ECoC awards 1985 – 2030

## 1985-1996

- Athens 1985
- Florence 1986
- Amsterdam 1987
- Berlin 1988
- Paris 1989
- Glasgow 1990

12 hosts

All ECC

Member States

## 1997-2006

21 hosts

- Thessaloniki 1997
- Stockholm 1998
- Weimar 1999
- 2000 Avignon, Bergen, Bologna, Brussels, Kraków, Helsinki, Prague, Reykjavík, Santiago Compostela

## 2007-2019

27 hosts

- Luxembourg GR & Sibiu 2007
- Liverpool & Stavanger 2008
- Linz & Vilnius 2009
- Essen-Ruhr, Pécs & İstanbul 2010
- Tallinn & Turku 2011
- Guimarães & Maribor 2012

## 2020-2030

31 hosts

- Galway & Rijeka 2020
- Esch-sur-Alzette, Kaunas & Novi Sad 2022
- Elefsina, Timisoara, Veszprém 2023
- Bad Ischl, Bodø & Tartu 2024
- Chemnitz & Nova Gorica 2025

# 73 ECoC hosts 1985-2025

## 1985-1996

- Dublin 1991
- Madrid 1992
- Antwerp 1993
- Lisbon 1994
- Luxembourg 1995
- Copenhagen 1996

- Rotterdam & Porto 2001
- Bruges & Salamanca 2002
- Graz 2003
- Genoa & Lille 2004
- Cork 2005; Patras 2006

- Marseille-Provence & Košice 2013
- Riga & Umeå 2014
- Mons & Plzeň 2015
- San Sebastián & Wrocław 2016
- Aarhus & Paphos 2017
- Valletta & Leeuwarden 2018
- Plovdiv & Matera 2019

- Oulu & Trenčín 2026
- Liepaja & Evora 2027
- Budweis, Skopje & Bourges 2028
- Lublin & Kiruna in 2029
- Leuven, Nikšić 2030 + Cyprus

# What we (think we) know...

Extremely diverse  
budgets...

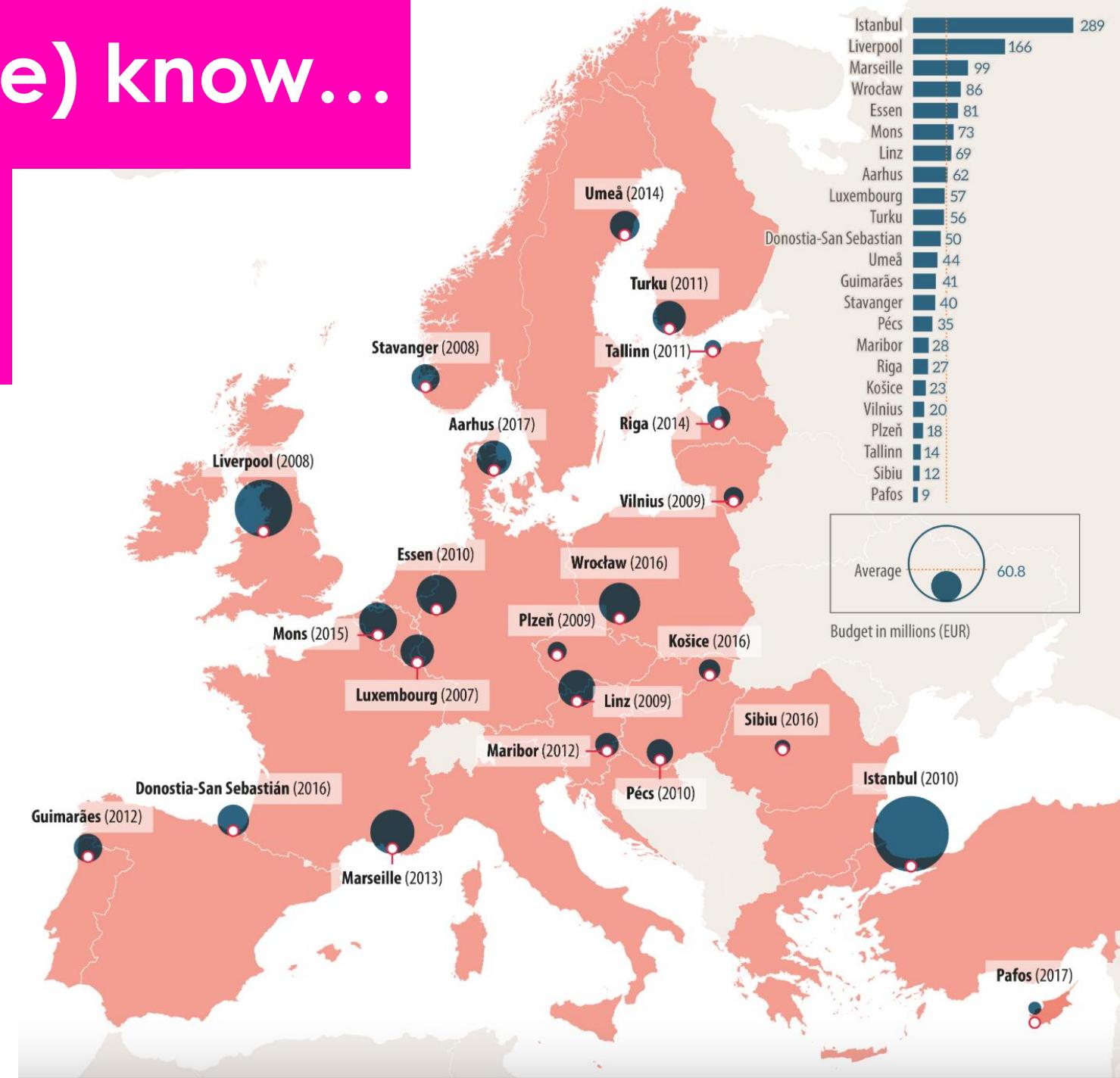
Data claims from 2008-2017

From 9m (Pafos)

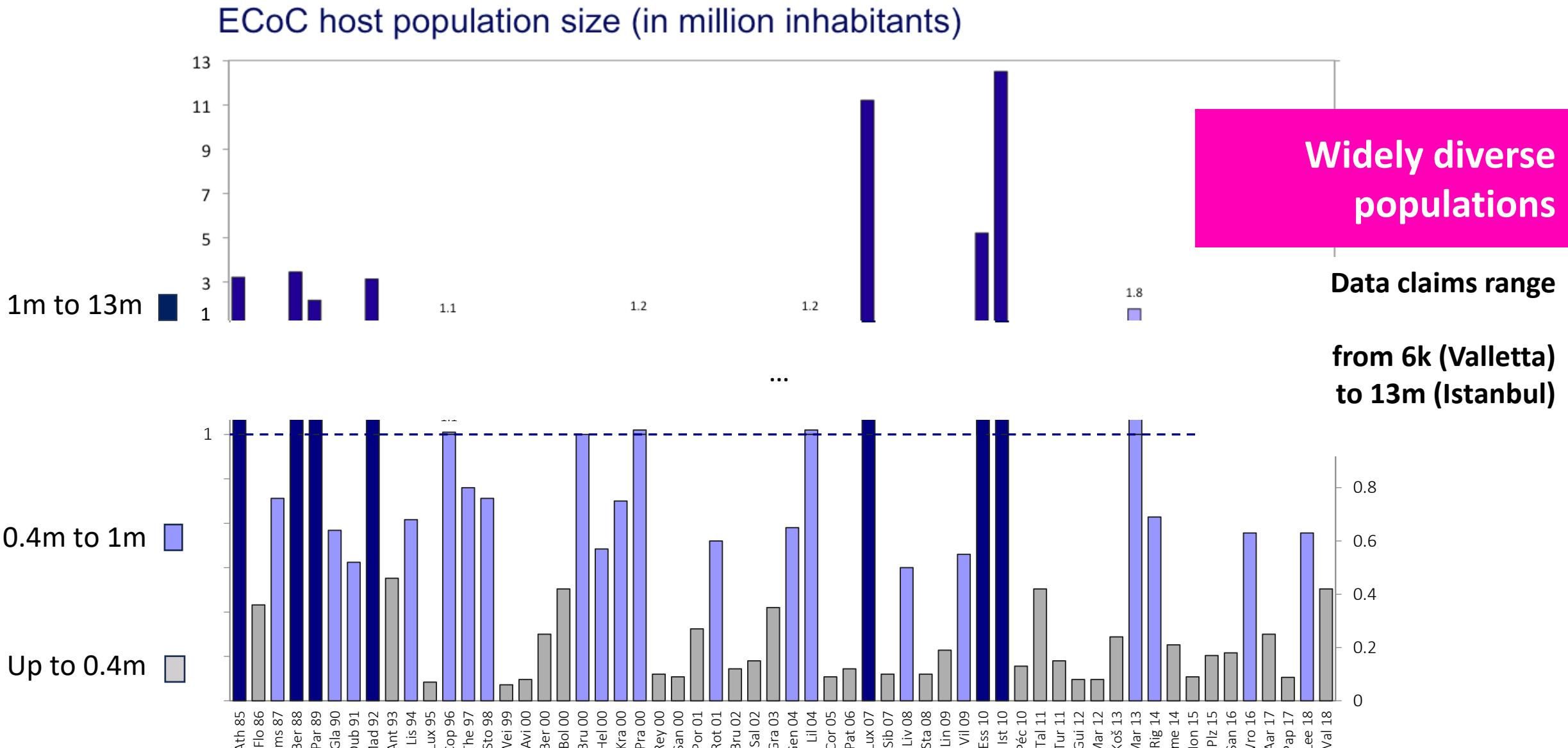
To 166m (Liverpool)  
and 289m (Istanbul)

Average in this period: 60m

(New Average in 2018-2025: 30m)

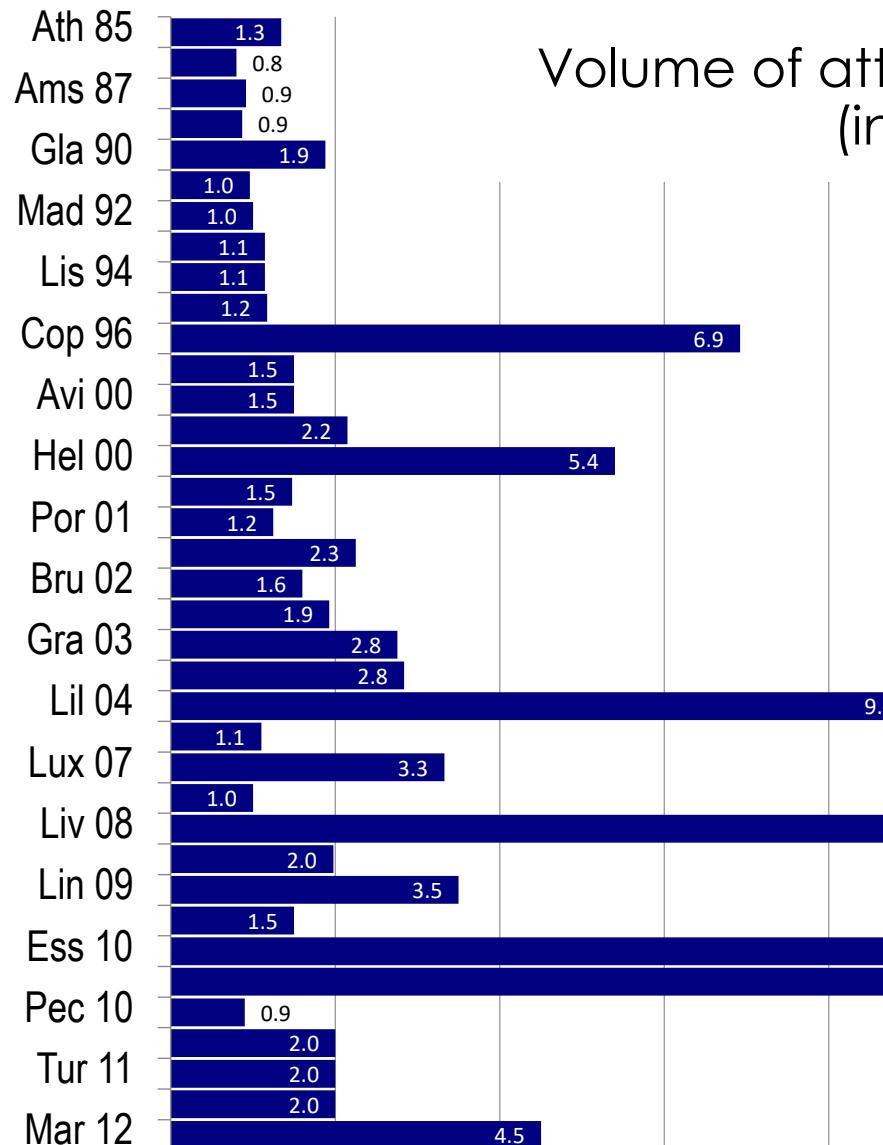


# Many population sizes, uncomparable data...



Sources: Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a); Palmer and Richards (2007); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); online city census data

# Uncomparable numerical data...



Volume of attendance at ECoC activity 1985-2012  
(in million attendances per ECoC year)

**Widely diverse  
audience data**

**Data claims range**

**from 800k to 10m  
attendances a year**

\* Liverpool data reflects 4 years of themed ECoC programming. ECoC year alone secured 9.8 million attendances

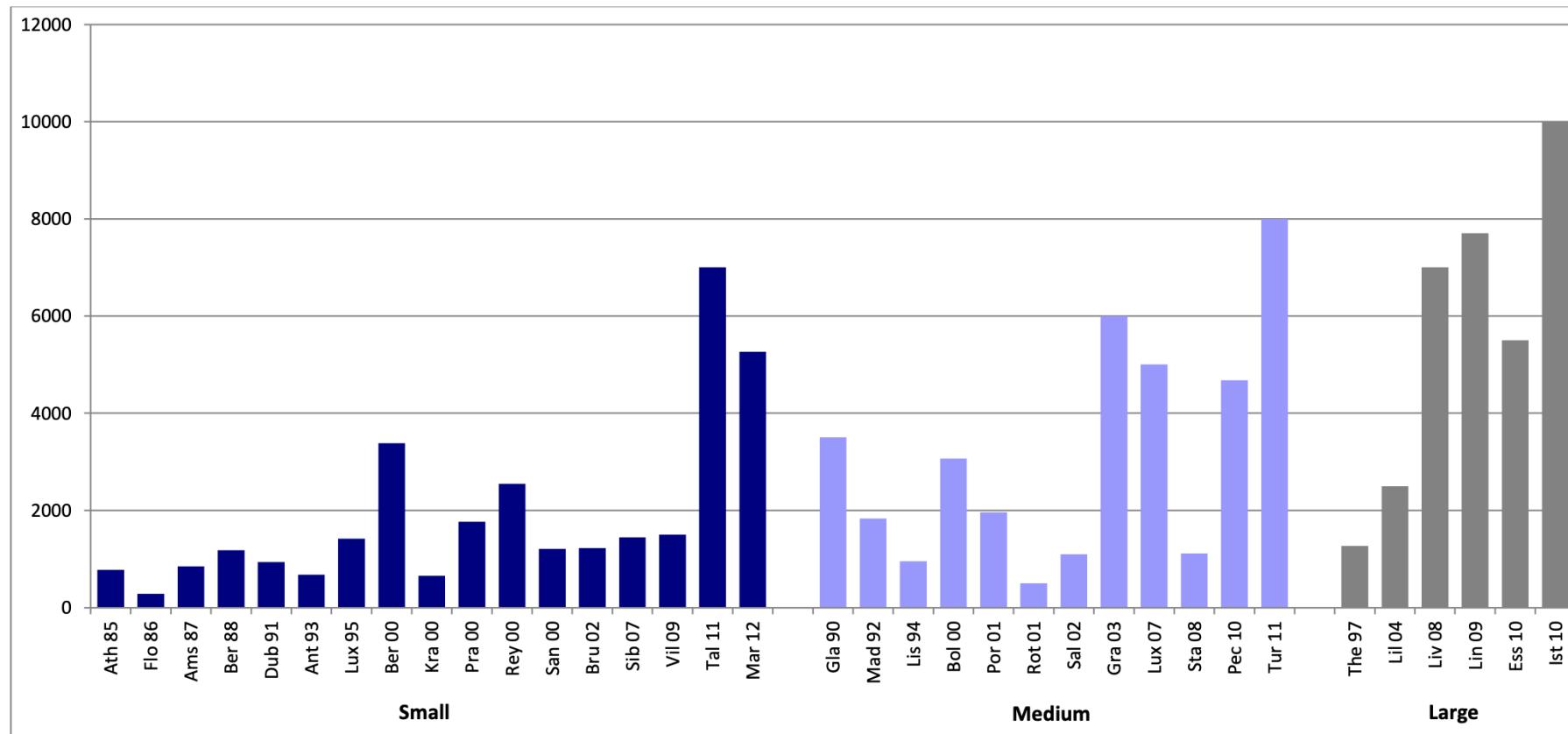
Sources: Axe Culture (2005); ECORYS (2009a; 2009b; 2010a; 2011c; 2011d; 2012a; 2012b; 2013a); Garcia et al. (2010); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Quinn and O'Halloran (2006)

# Uncomparable numerical data...

Volume of events within the official ECoC programme (1985-2012)

(per ECoC year & budget scales)

**Figure 12: Number of events by ECoC, 1985-2012, by income group**



**Sources:** Axe Culture (2005); Bruges 2002 (2003); Deffner and Labrianidis (2005); ECORYS (2009b; 2010b; 2011c; 2011d; 2012b; 2013a); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Richards and Rotariu (2011); Richards and Wilson (2004)

Widely diverse event volumes

Data claims range

from 500 events to 10,000 events

Other terms used include

Projects (100 to 1.5k)  
Activities (20k to 50k)

Metrics / definitions are not comparable

# But similar stories to tell... “Success Factors”

<b>A clear vision, set up from the start</b>	Approaches to developing a vision, including key objectives and programming themes, vary significantly between ECoCs; however, clarity and consistency of approach seems to have been important.
<b>Distinct programming</b>	ECoCs are keen to ensure that programming is distinctive, reflecting the city's assets and history, and expressing the cultural identity of the area, as well as providing the opportunity for work that might be innovative and/or internationally recognised.
<b>A balance between event programming and relevant infrastructure development</b>	This is an area where marked differences exist, but a common issue is the city's ability to determine whether investment in infrastructures (either cultural or for supporting services) is required in order to maximise the benefits of the ECoC year, and whether this needs to be coordinated directly by ECoC teams or developed in parallel.

# But similar stories to tell... “Success Factors”

<b>Clear lines of communication adapted to different constituencies</b>	For instance, a distinction between local, national and international communication strategies.
<b>Broad public engagement</b>	Dedicated strategies to involve the local population and maximise their sense of ownership, from targeted community programming to volunteering schemes.
<b>Strong governance &amp; financing models</b>	Governance and funding models that are independent of political interference, and that can provide a single point of clarity in terms of the management of an ECoC, are important.
<b>A commitment to legacy planning</b>	Actively planning for legacy, whether in terms of the long-term physical infrastructure for culture, engagement with communities or the nature of the cultural offer, is considered crucial.

## Cultural & image impacts

- Significant impact on the city's cultural vibrancy by
  - strengthening formal & informal networks,
  - opening up possibilities for new collaborations,
  - encouraging new work to continue
  - raising the capacity and ambition of the cultural sector
- **Image renaissance** for low (or negative) profile cities
  - attracting considerable media attention enhancing local, national and international perceptions.

## Social impacts

- **Improved local perceptions** of city
  - Many editions claim that **50% to 90%** of their local population felt their city is a 'better place' after the ECoC.
- Fostering local **pride** and a 'can do' attitude
- Increasing the **volume & diversity in cultural audiences** during ECoC year.
  - Hosts claim that **over half** of their local population engaged with their ECoC programme.

## Economic

### Immediate impacts

- Considerable effect on immediate to medium-term **tourism trends**, which, in turn, can have a significant impact on the city's economy.

### Long-term effects

- Cities undergoing major repositioning during or post ECoC can sustain **growth in tourism visits and expenditure** in the long term.

# How we know it

Models for ECoC evidence capture

# A pre-history (1985-2015)

- **Mixed bag (1985-1987)**
  - *Ad hoc research, last minute*
  - *No baselines, no legacy*
  - *No expertise to capture / understand the value and impact of culture*
- ***The very first studies, first layers of reliable data***
  - John Myerscough, *Economic value of the Arts* (1988)
  - *Monitoring Glasgow 1990* (1988-1991)
  - *The Myerscough Report* (1994) Network of European Cities of Culture
  - *The Palmer / Rae Report* (1995-2005) European Commission

# The first long term legacy study (1990-2001-2004)

The 10 year legacy  
Of Glasgow 1990

## Areas of study

UNIVERSITY  
of  
GLASGOW



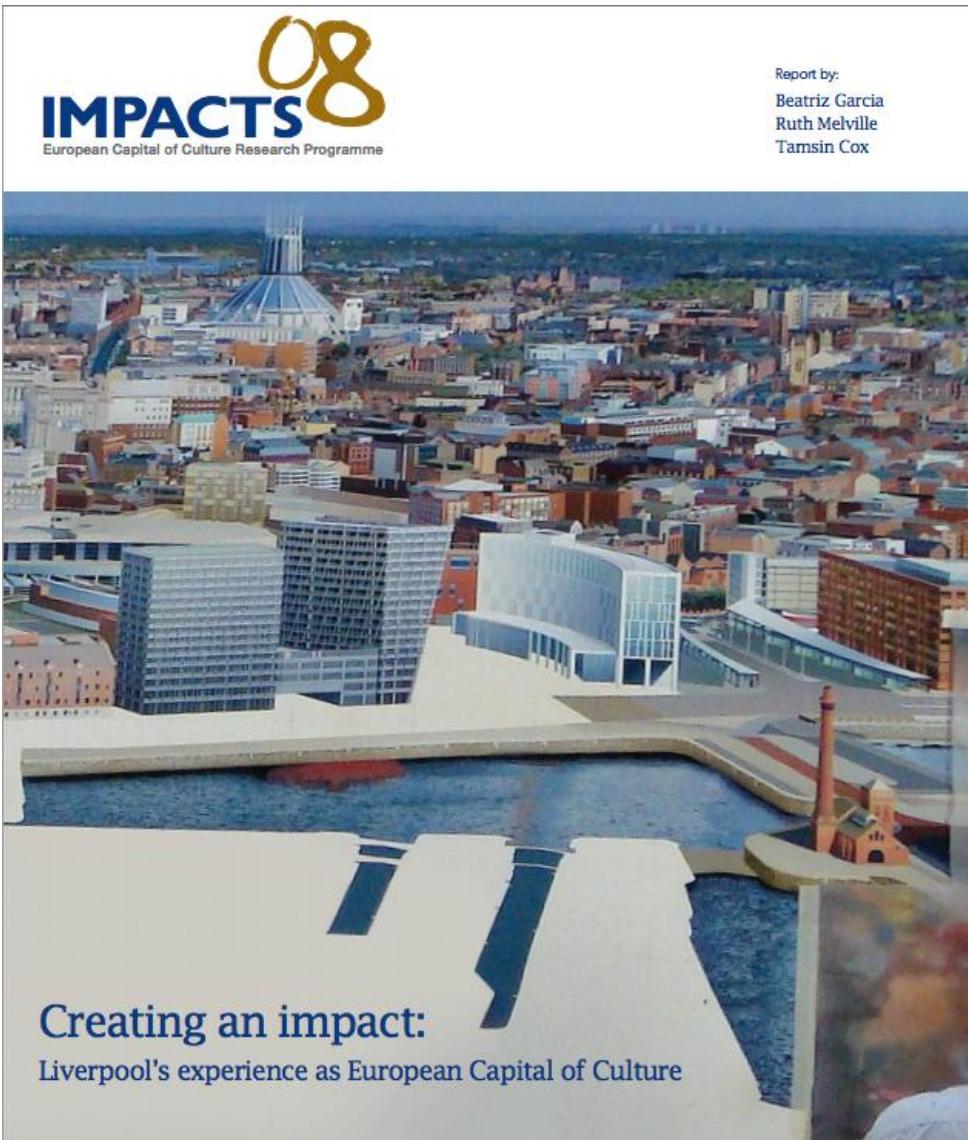
Objectives	Areas to look at	Data collection
<i>Legacy of investment in cultural events</i>		
•Rationale of investment	Reasons to bid, provisions	Doc review & interviews
•Key socio-cult legacies	Physical and intangible	Interviews
•City image change	Evolution of perceptions 86-2000	Press content analysis

## Socio-political context

•Agendas of key actors	GDC, SRC, GDA, GGTV...	Doc review & interviews
•Nature of partnerships	Public and private	Doc review & interviews
•Effect of political change	Local reorganisation, Tory to Labour, Scottish devolution	Doc review & interviews

CENTRE FOR CULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH

# The first comprehensive (transversal + long term) evaluation



Report by:  
Beatriz Garcia  
Ruth Melville  
Tamsin Cox

**Baseline  
Build up  
Hosting  
and Legacy**

**Liverpool 2008**

## Intended Impacts

### Liverpool Culture Company Aims

- To create and present the **best of** local, national and international **art and events** in all genres
- To build **community** enthusiasm, creativity and **participation**
- To maintain, enhance and **grow** the **cultural infrastructure** of Liverpool
- To **increase the levels of visitors** and inward investment in Liverpool
- To **reposition Liverpool** as a world class city by 2008

### 2008 European Capital of Culture Vision

- To positively **reposition Liverpool** to a national and international audience
- To encourage and **increase participation** in cultural activity by people from **communities**
- To create **long term growth and sustainability** in the city's **cultural sector**
- To develop greater **recognition nationally and internationally for the role of arts and culture** in making our cities better places to live, work and visit

## Impact clusters

### economy

### cultural vibrancy

### participation

### image

- To create and present the **best of** local, national and international **art and events** in all genres
- To build **community** enthusiasm, creativity and **participation**
- To maintain, enhance and grow the **cultural infrastructure** of Liverpool
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To positively **reposition Liverpool** to a national and international audience

To encourage and **increase participation** in cultural activity by people from **communities**

To create **long term growth and sustainability** in the city's cultural sector

To develop greater **recognition nationally and internationally for the role of arts and culture** in making our cities better places to live, work and visit

## Impact clusters

economy    cultural vibrancy | participation    image

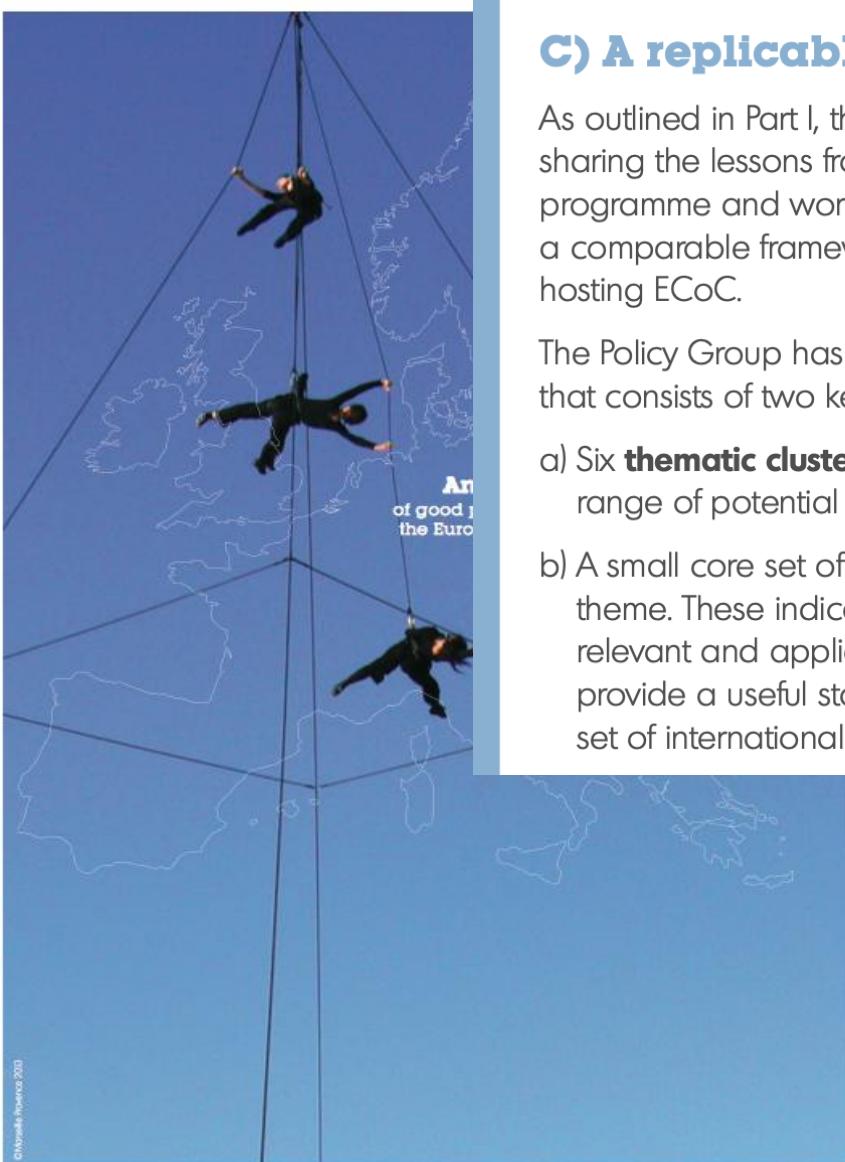
## Impact clusters



## Impact research model



# The first comparative framework for ECoC evaluation



## C) A replicable research framework

As outlined in Part I, the aims of the Policy Group included sharing the lessons from Liverpool's Impacts 08 research programme and working with partner cities to recommend a comparable framework for measuring the impact of hosting ECoC.

The Policy Group has agreed a broad research framework that consists of two key elements:

- Six thematic clusters** that aim to encompass the broad range of potential impacts;
- A small core set of priority indicators** supporting each theme. These indicators have been selected for being relevant and applicable in each partner city and they provide a useful starting point for further developing a core set of internationally comparable indicators.

## Framework: Six themes and priority indicators

### 1) Cultural vibrancy and sustainability

This theme considers the programme content of the ECoC year itself and the impact upon the vitality and sustainability of the cultural system and creative economy of the event host-city. Sub-themes include: artistic vibrancy of the year (cultural offer, innovative productions); profile of the sector (number and type of organisations, facilities and jobs); sustainability of the system (e.g. skill development in the cultural sector); the ECoC contribution (e.g. direct investment/funding of the city's cultural system) and contribution of other relevant regional, national or international institutions.

Sub theme	Key Indicator
Level of Cultural Offer	1.1 No. of original art works commissioned by ECoC
Innovative artistic productions	1.2 Establishment of new artistic collaborations that arise from ECoC activity: Inside own genre/Across genres/With business/With public institutions vs. Locally/Nationally/Internationally

### 2) Cultural Access and Participation

This theme attempts to understand: what is the cultural offer; how access to it is encouraged; who is accessing it; why are they accessing it; and what value do they derive from it. Answering these questions requires the assessment of demographic and geographic data on participants and non-participants in cultural activities, and access to opportunities for cultural involvement. In addition, it focuses on particular sub-cultures and groups and explores experiences, cultural values, changing levels of participation and interests, and reasons for participation.

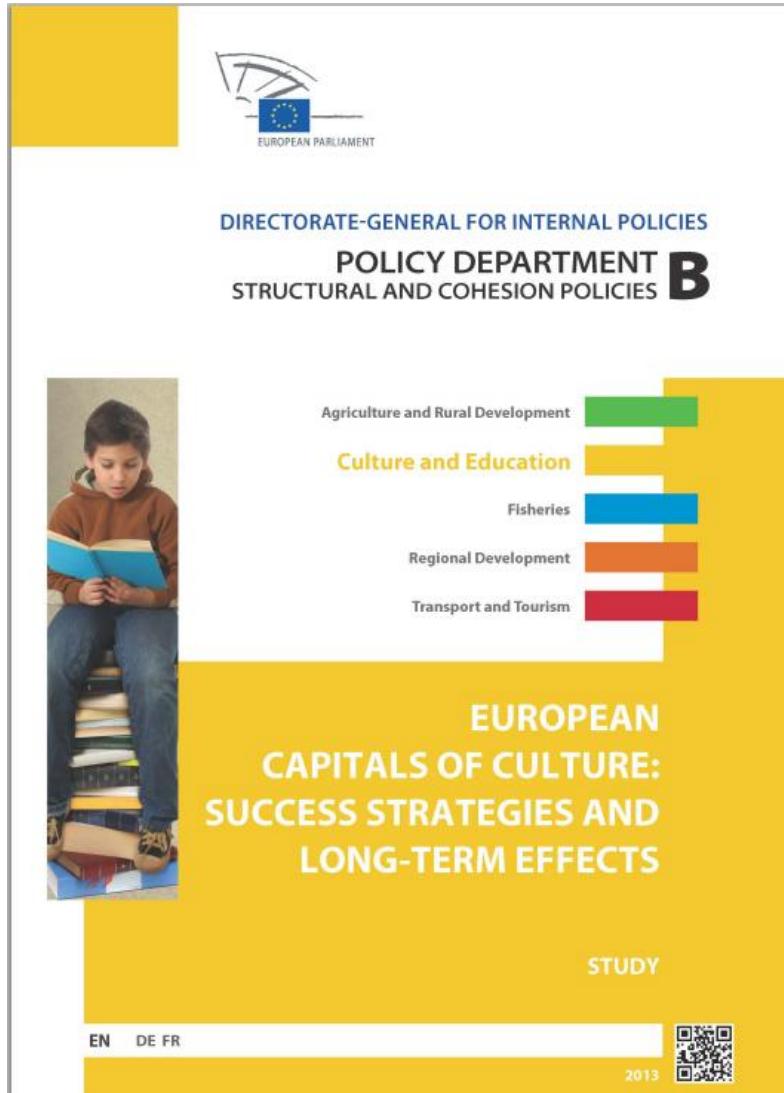
Sub theme	Key Indicator
Number of participants and events generated by ECOC activity	2.1 Total Number of ECoC events <sup>23</sup>
	2.2 Attendance at ECoC events

### 3) Identity, Image and Place

This theme explores the perceptions and awareness of both the ECoC programme and the host city, and how these change as a result of the ECoC year. The sub-themes for this area include the positioning/repositioning of the host-city before and after becoming ECoC, the changing perceptions of the city by local communities, event visitors, and non-visitors; and the strength of local identity and self-confidence.

Sub theme	Key Indicator
Number and value of published articles and media	3.1 Number of national and local press articles with reference to ECoC: within print media, social media networks and ideally to include an assessment of the tone of the coverage i.e. % positive and negative
National image of city	3.2 National perception of the ECoC: i.e. % recognition rate of ECoC, likelihood/desire to visit

# The first joint assessment of ECoC evidence | 30 years



The image shows the front cover of a study report. At the top left is the European Parliament logo. Below it, the text reads 'DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES' and 'POLICY DEPARTMENT B' with 'STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES' underneath. To the left of the main text is a vertical photograph of a young boy sitting on a stack of books, reading a book. The main title of the study is 'EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE: SUCCESS STRATEGIES AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS'. Below the title, the word 'STUDY' is centered. At the bottom left, there are language codes 'EN DE FR'. At the bottom right is a QR code and the year '2013'.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT B

STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

Agriculture and Rural Development

Culture and Education

Fisheries

Regional Development

Transport and Tourism

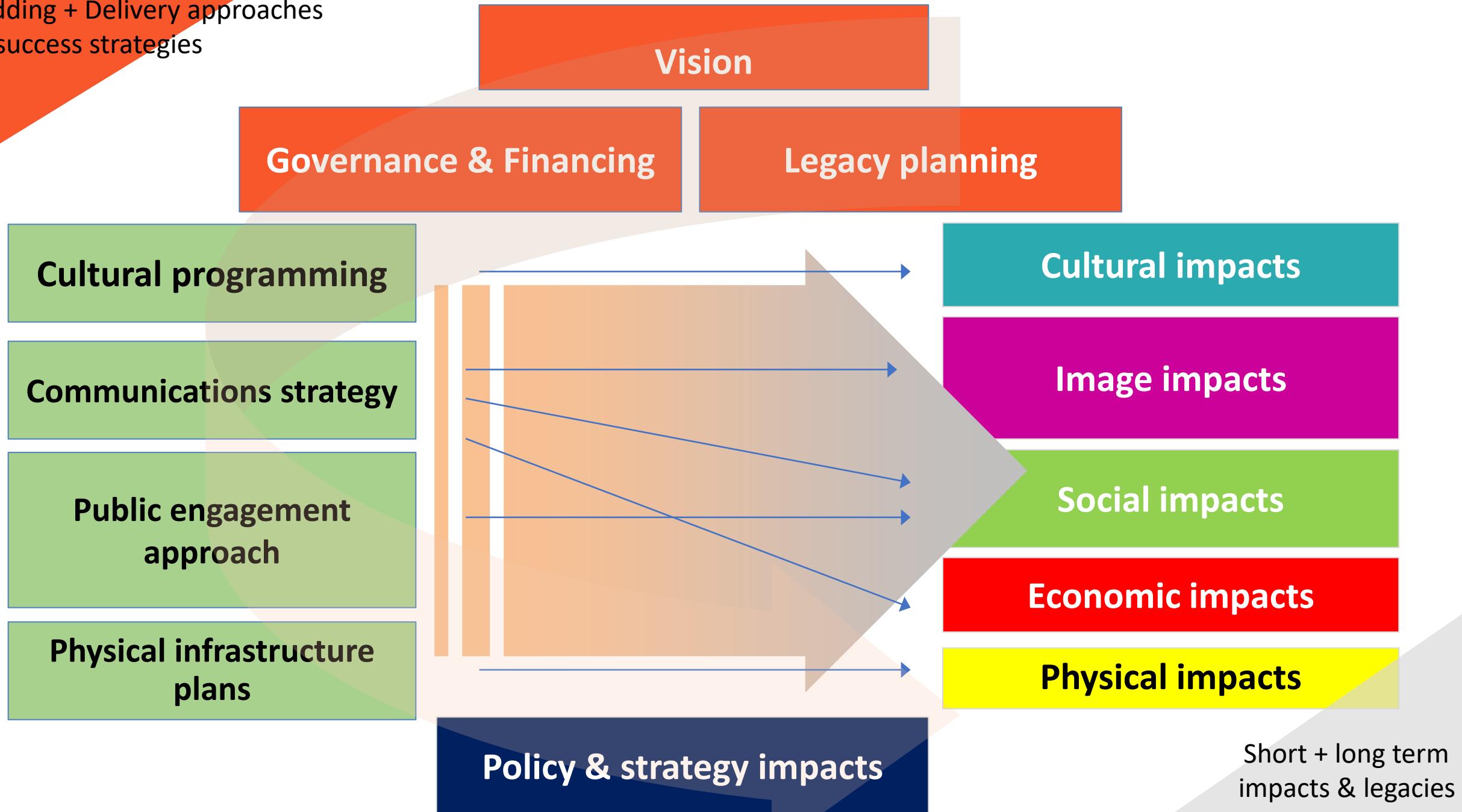
EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE:  
SUCCESS STRATEGIES AND  
LONG-TERM EFFECTS

STUDY

EN DE FR

2013

Bidding + Delivery approaches  
& success strategies



# The first ECoC evaluation guidelines, European Commission



## **European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) 2020-2033**

**Guidelines for the cities' own evaluations  
of the results of their ECOC**

**Brussels, May 2018**

**Annex 10 - Guidelines for the cities' own evaluations  
of the results of each ECoC**

# The first ECoC evaluation guidelines, European Commission

**GO1: Safeguard & promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common features they share, increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural space**

**GO2: foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities**

## **Specific Objectives (SO)**

SO1: Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offering in cities, including through transnational co-operation

SO2: Widen access to and participation in culture

SO3: Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors

SO4: Raise the international profile of cities through culture

# GO1: Safeguard & promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common features they share, increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural space

## GO2: foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities

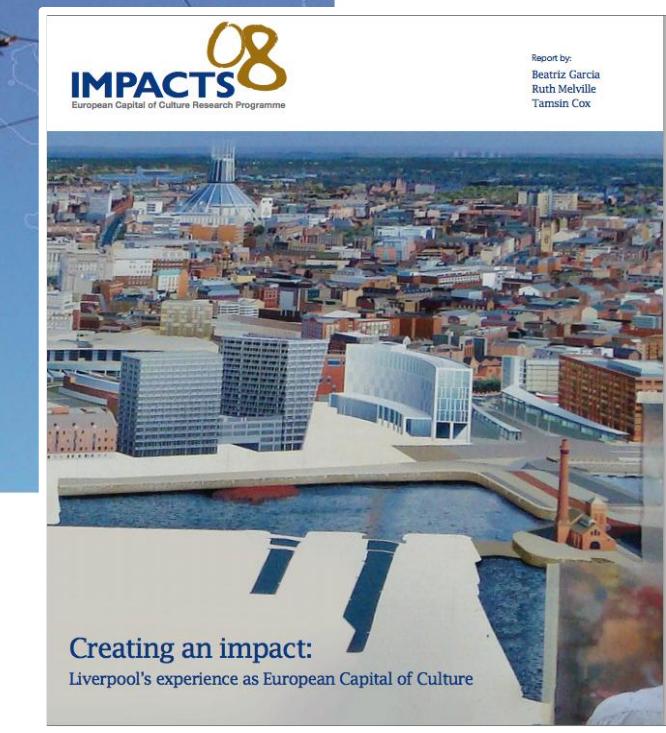
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SO1.1- Stimulate extensive cultural programmes of high <u>artistic quality</u>	SO1.2-Ensure cultural programmes feature a strong <u>European dimension</u> and transnational <u>co-operation</u>	SO2.1- <u>Involve a wide range</u> of citizens and stakeholders in preparing and <u>implementing</u> the cultural programme	SO2.2. Create <u>new opportunities</u> for a wide range of citizens to <u>attend or participate</u> in cultural events	SO3.1 <u>Improve cultural infrastructure</u>	SO3.2. <u>Develop the skills, capacity and governance</u> of the cultural sector	SO3.3- <u>Stimulate partnership and co-operation</u> with other sectors	SO4.1- <u>Promote</u> the city and its cultural programme	SO4.2- <u>Improve</u> the international outlook of residents

### Possible impacts...

Cultural Impact	Policy & European Impact	Social Impact	Social Impact	Urban Impact	Cultural Impact	Economic Impact	Economic Impact	Policy & European Impact
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# ECoCs as a key referent for cultural evaluation modelling



**So... Where are we now?**

# Where are we now?

(or at least 'relevant'!)

Evaluation becomes key...

...to the **bidding** process

# GO1: Safeguard & promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common features they share, increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural space

## GO2: foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities

### Specific Objectives (SO)

SO1: Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offering in cities, including through transnational co-operation		SO2: Widen access to and participation in culture		SO3: Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors			SO4: Raise the international profile of cities through culture	
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### Possible impacts...

Cultural Impact	Policy & European Impact	Social Impact	Social Impact	Urban Impact	Cultural Impact	Economic Impact	Economic Impact	Policy & European Impact
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**GO1: Safeguard**

Diversity \* Belonging \* Identity \* Legacy  
Cultural Heritage \* City Development  
\*Transformation \* Innovation

features they

**GO2: fos**

Development of

**Specific Objectives (SO)**

Artistic Quality,  
Excellence

European Cooperation  
European programming

Citizen co- creation.  
Stakeholder involvement

Citizen attendance  
Citizen participation

Infrastructure development

Sector skills  
Sector governance

Cross-sectoral cooperation  
Partnerships

City image  
International profile  
International outlook

**Possible impacts...**

Cultural Impact

Policy &  
European Impact

Social impact

Social Impact

Urban  
Impact

Cultural  
Impact

Economic  
Impact

Economic  
Impact

Policy &  
European  
Impact

# Where are we now?

Evaluation becomes key...  
...to the **legacy** story

# Stronger ECoC evaluations...

- ECoC editions getting better at linking their vision with their evaluation framework
- But ongoing challenges
  - No shared indicators
  - Data of varied quality and reliability
  - Resources far too limited in most cases : rigour vs visibility of results
- Reasons to be hopeful...
  - The first ECoC evaluation peer group is up and running
  - Culture Next – Candidate Cities Network, SDG Lab...

# This is why today matters



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Monitor 2024 team + Reference Group