

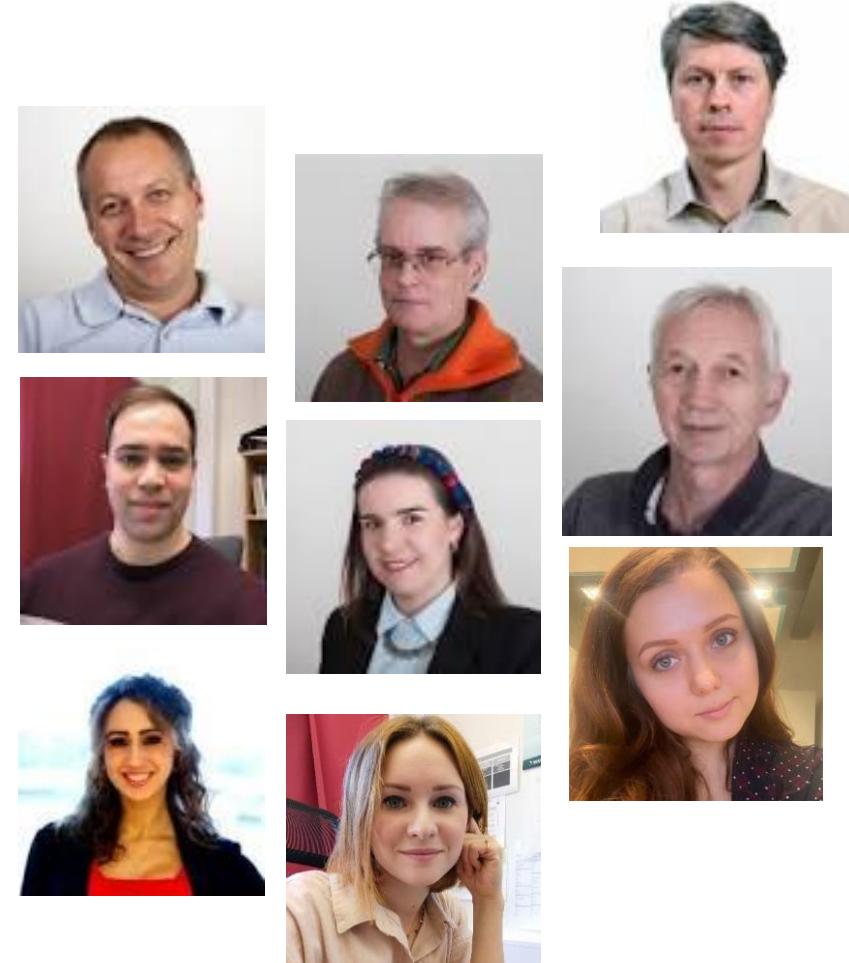


“Culture as Catalyst: Assessing Bodø2024 European Capital of Culture”

Presentation of the main findings from the final evaluation report

MONITOR 2024 team

- European Commission (EC) requires a formal evaluation of all ECOCs, including Bodø 2024 ECOC:
 - ✓ ECOCs are free to choose methodology and actors for the evaluation
 - ✓ But should follow guidelines, that specify minimum set of indicators
 - ✓ Both baseline data; pre-title and after title-year data, to clearly see the effects and impacts
- An agreement between Bodø2024 IKS and Nord University about the evaluation and monitoring of Bodø2024 ECOC (2022 – 2025):
 - ✓ The final evaluation report to be published by end of 2025
 - ✓ Main findings are presented at this conference
- MONITOR 2024: A team of dedicated researchers from Nord University Business School



MONITOR 2024: our research approach

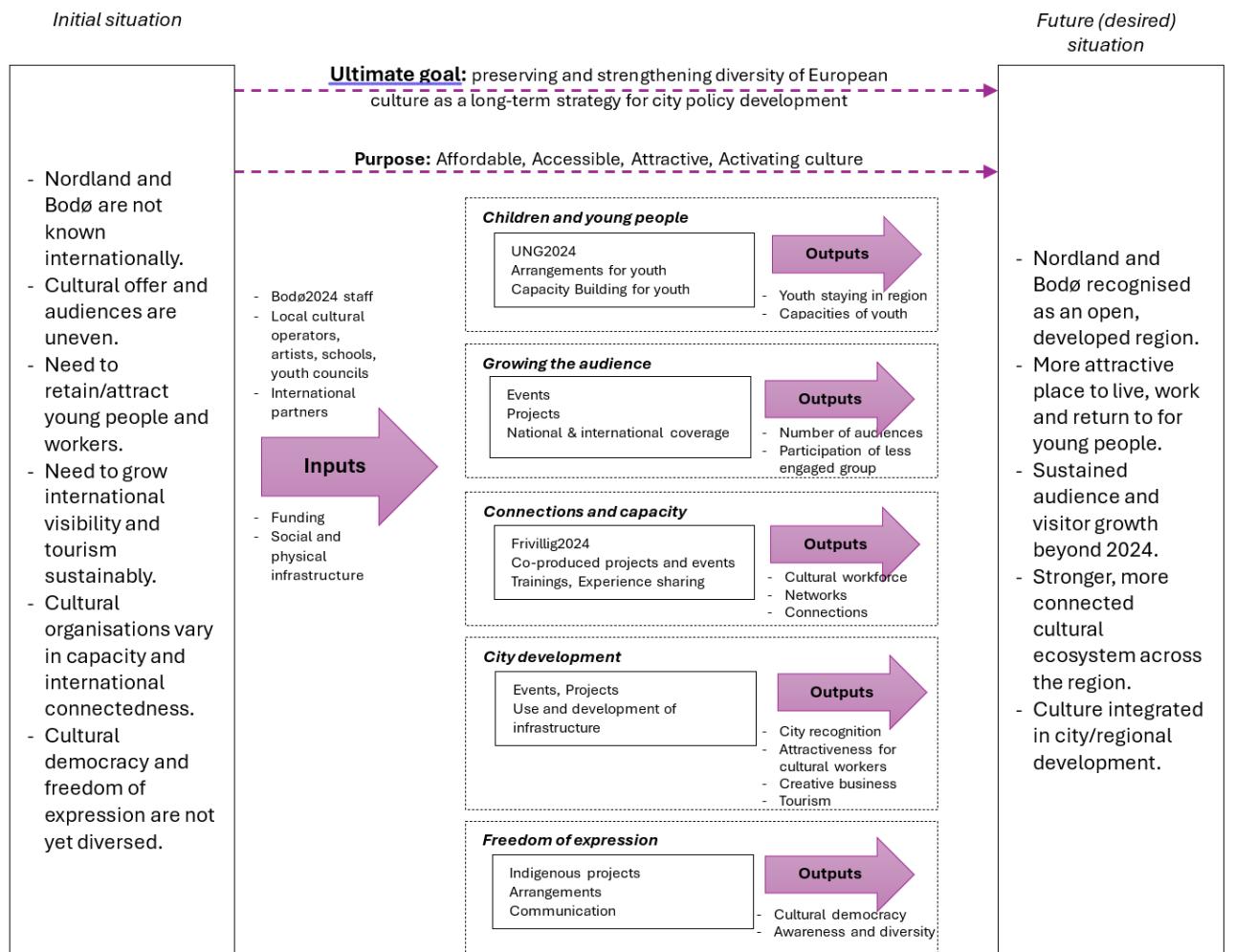
“Social audit” methodology:

- ✓ Interpreting Bodø2024 ECOC’s goals, outcomes and actions with help of theory of change (ToC)
- ✓ Interpreting “culture” and its meanings

Using different sources and methodologies to collect/analyze data:

- ✓ *Classical*: statistics, surveys, interviews, regressions, observations, etc.
- ✓ *New*: People Jury, Teledata, AI-assisted media analysis, Agent-Based Modeling (ABM)

Plan to publish 15 topic-specific reports and the final evaluation report



Scientific output and quality assurance

R&D series of reports (<https://site.nord.no/monitor2024/>)

Published/Under final review/In progress

1. Inception report
2. Baseline report
3. Scenarios report
4. Norwegian media - AI-assisted analysis
5. Adolescence report
6. Program event report
7. Cultural projects report
8. Artist/cultural worker report
9. Volunteers report
10. University students report
11. Peoples' jury report
12. Social media report
13. Updated scenario report
14. Updated baseline report
15. Monitor2024 self-reflection report
16. Final summary report



Members of MONITOR2024 Reference Group:

- ✓ Dr Beatriz Garcia, Expert, International Cultural Policy & Mega Events
- ✓ Dr Martin Piber, Professor, University of Innsbruck
- ✓ Dr Hilmar Rommetvedt, Researchers 1, NORCE
- ✓ Director Odd Henriksen, Nordland County
- ✓ Vise-director Anna Margrethe Welle, Bodø municipality

What was MONITOR 2024 evaluating in terms of Bodø2024 ECOC?

Key Priorities of Bodø2024 ECOC

- Bodø2024 ECOC:

- ✓ The first ECOC located north of the Arctic circle

- ✓ Culture as a catalyst for:
 - ❑ Regional development
 - ❑ Civic engagement
 - ❑ International visibility

- ✓ Five strategic key priorities:

- ❑ What was achieved?
 - ❑ What was challenging?

Key priority

Children and young people

Anticipated impact

- An improved cultural education model
- Between 80% and 100% of school students take part
- Increase by 50% students returning after studying elsewhere

Growing our audience

- Overall audience numbers improve by 30% and by 40% from hard to reach groups

Connections and capacity

- Increase of 20% in cultural workforce
- Each of 10 main towns is a recognised cultural, cool hotspot

City Development

- Bodø known as a cool European cultural city
- 20% increase in new workers coming to Nordland and Bodø.
- Creative businesses increase by 100%; Tourist jobs by 10%
- 30% increase in hotel stays up to 2024; continued post 2024 growth

Freedom of expression

- Nordland recognised as best practice example of cultural democracy

Source: Bodø2024 Bid Book (2019: 14-15)

Findings: Key Priority “Children and Young People”

By Dr Bjørn Willy Åmo

Satisfaction with home-municipality & the intent to move

High satisfaction with home-municipality across ages

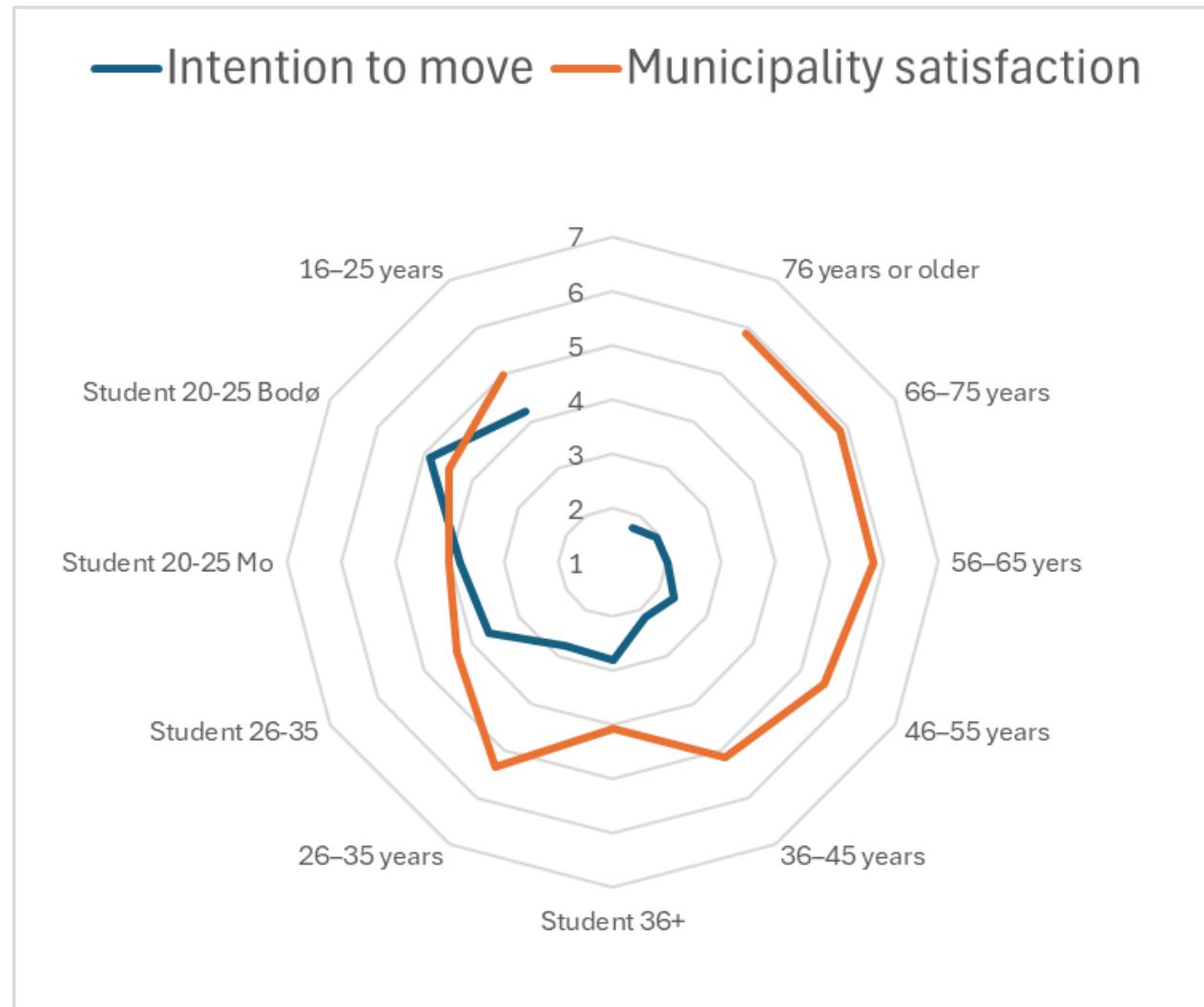
Higher intent to move among young

Student report (n=265 BSc BusAdm)

Peoples jury (n= 1012 inhabitants Bodø/Nordl.C.)

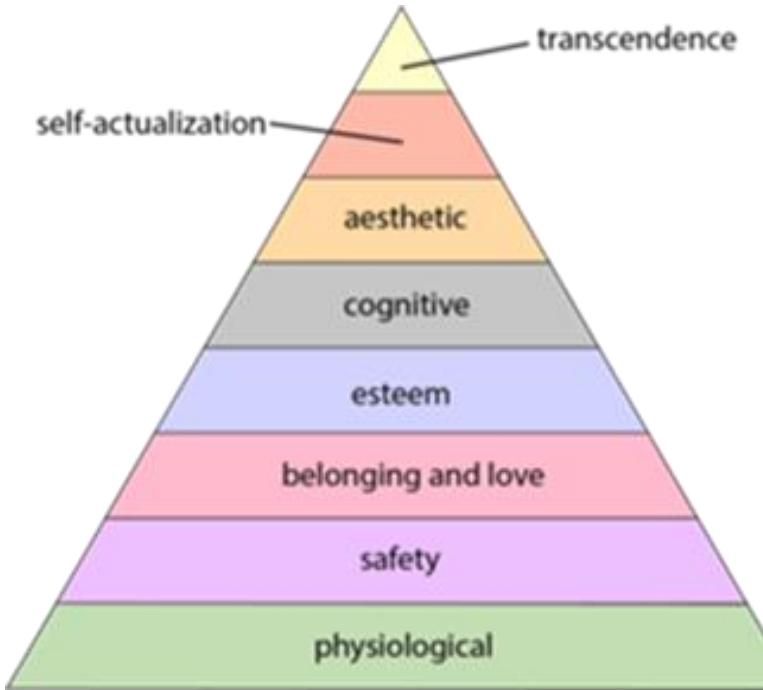
Adolescence report (n=253 vg.sk)

Volunteers report (n=51 young crew)



Note: 1 equal Totally Disagree, 2 equals Disagree, 3 equals Disagree somewhat, 4 equals Neutral, 5 equals Agree Somewhat, 6 equals Agree, and 7 equals Totally Agree.

Settlement intentions among young people



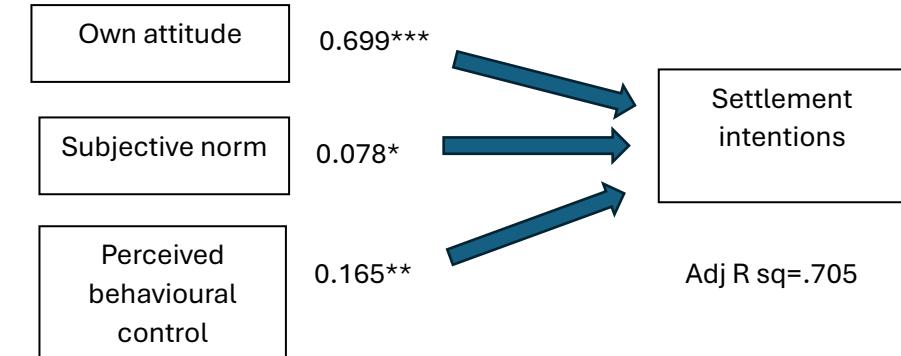
The hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943; 1970)

Adolescence report (n=253 vg.sk)

- Will I thrive here?

- How do important others advice me?

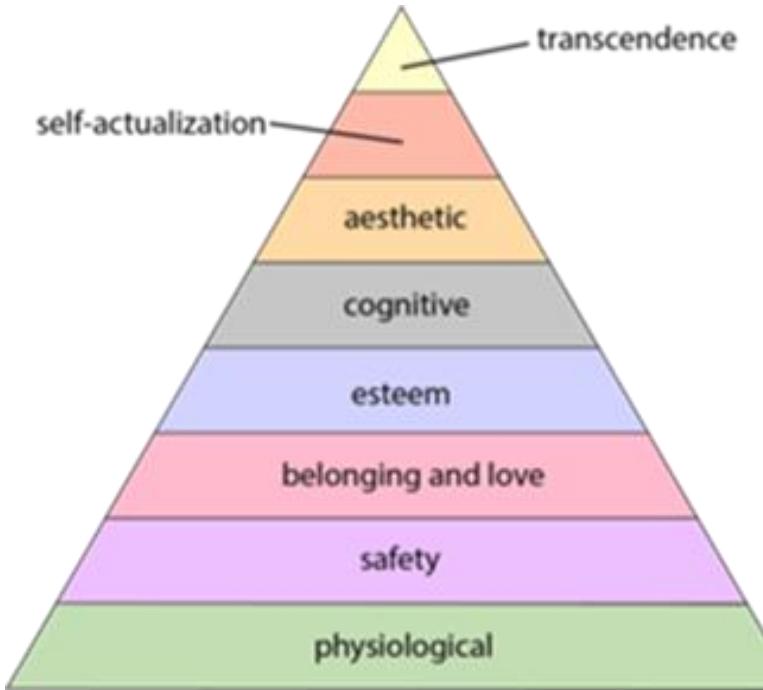
- Can I live here?



Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior
– *Intention to stay in home-municipality*

- **Money, job, and a wife (male from Helgeland)**
- **The most important things for me are close friends and family and good job opportunities. And that my future children have a good upbringing there (female from Bodø).**

Settlement intentions among young people

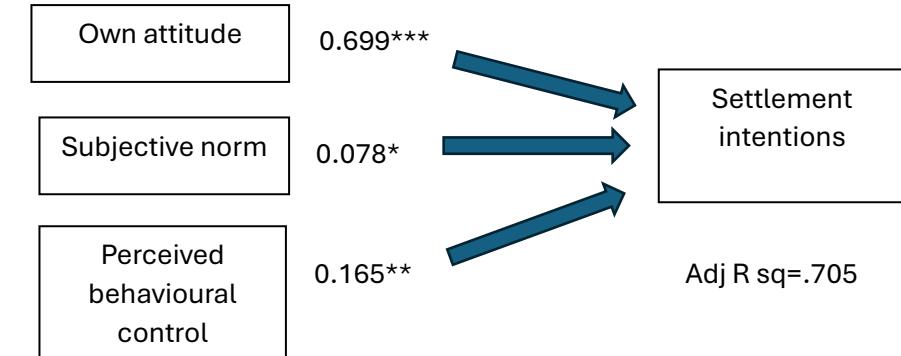


The hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943; 1970)

Adolescence report (n=253 vg.sk)

- Will I thrive here?

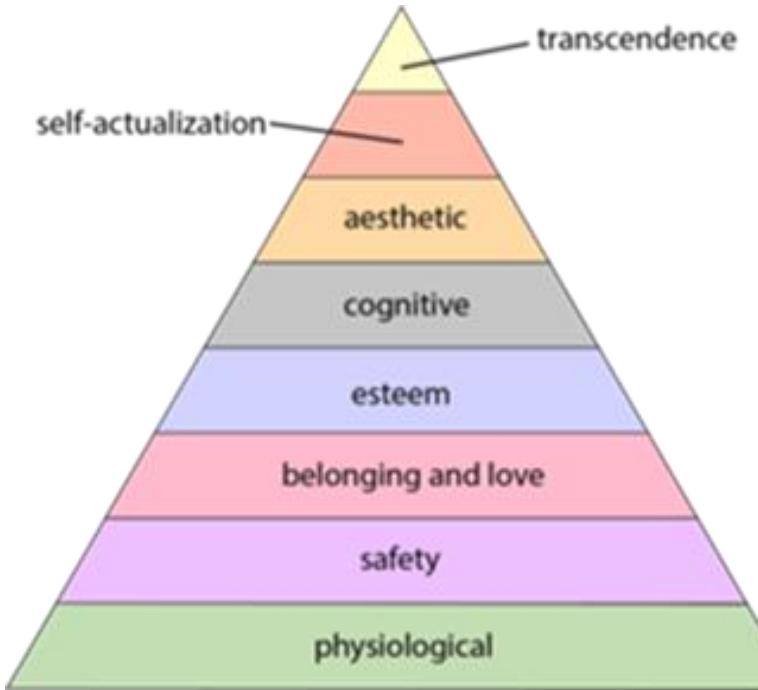
- How do important others advice me?
- Can I live here?



Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior
– *Intention to stay in home-municipality*

- ***Job, music, school, hospital*** (male from Helgeland).
- ***Have access to the sea and be able to have a boat*** (male from Lofoten).
- ***Opportunity for sports and outdoor activities*** (female from Salten).

Settlement intentions among young people

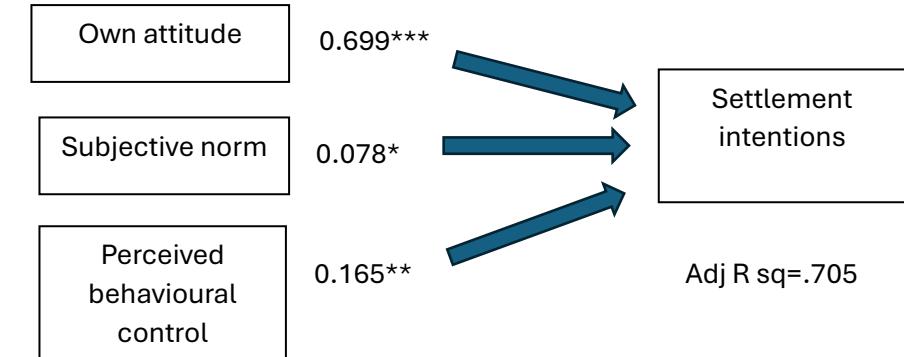


The hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943; 1970)

Adolescence report (n=253 vg.sk)

- Will I thrive here?

- How do important others advice me?
- Can I live here?



Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior
– *Intention to stay in home-municipality*

- The most important thing for me is that there are meeting places, both through leisure activities and other opportunities to meet people. (female from Salten).

Culture as a tool for societal developments



Youths miss socialising arenas allowing them to stand out as valuable new in-group members.

Current offerings only partly cover the needs for such arenas.

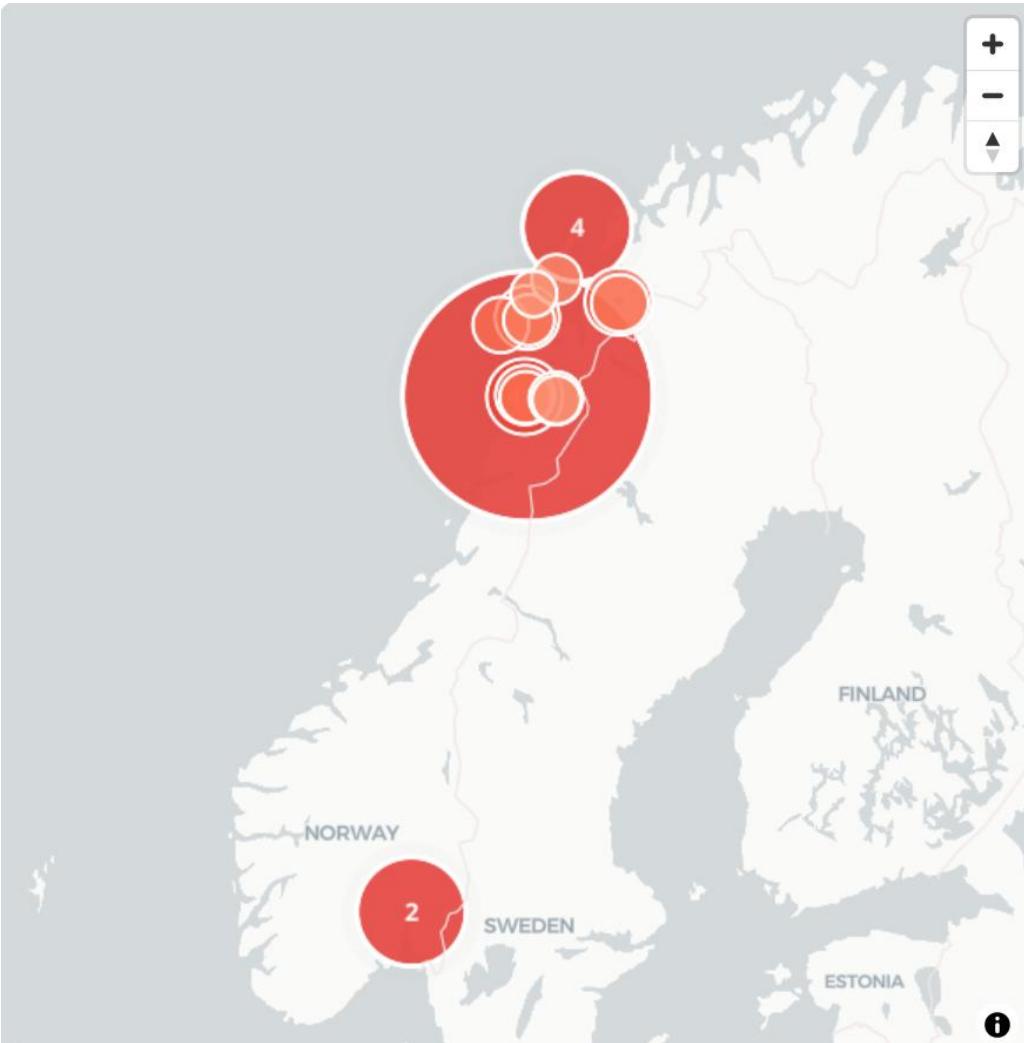
See-culture – established people need to reinforce and strengthen their in-groups. High-status culture allows spectators to build and share memorable moments, enforcing established social bonds.

Me-culture – young people need to form new social in-groups (family & friends). Culture which invite for co-creation and social interaction could act as an arena for such.

Findings: Key Priority “Growing Our Audience”

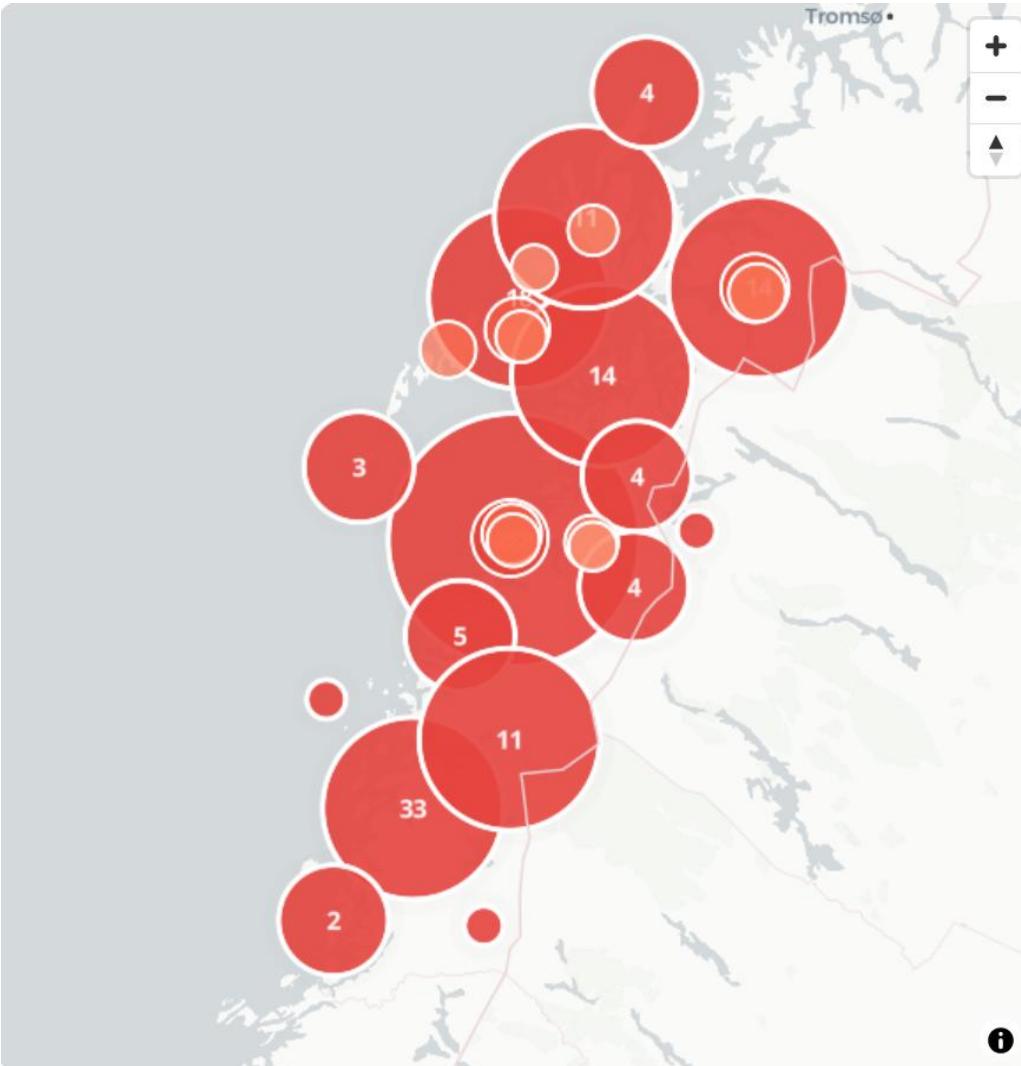
By Dr Oliver Henk

Achievements



- *300,000–355,000 participants across 434 events*
- *52% of events included active audience participation*
- *38% of events held outside Bodø, strengthening regional reach*
- *11% of program dedicated to Sami culture*
- *4,500+ volunteers, strong willingness to stay engaged (6.39/7)*

Achievements



- *300,000–355,000 participants across 434 events*
- *52% of events included active audience participation*
- *38% of events held outside Bodø, strengthening regional reach*
- *11% of program dedicated to Sami culture*
- *4,500+ volunteers, strong willingness to stay engaged (6.39/7)*

Achievements



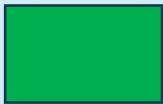
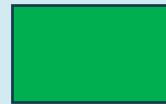
- *300,000–355,000 participants across 434 events*
- *52% of events included active audience participation*
- *38% of events held outside Bodø, strengthening regional reach*
- *11% of program dedicated to Sami culture*
- *4,500+ volunteers, strong willingness to stay engaged (6.39/7)*

Challenges

- 60% of PPJ members never attended any events
- Only 10% of upper secondary Pupils felt that Bodø2024 concerned them
- Only about 10% of the events offered digital access

Cultural Enthusiasts

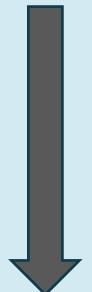
(14.5% of PPJ)



Early

Mid

Late



Early enthusiasm waned over time

Pragmatic Skeptics

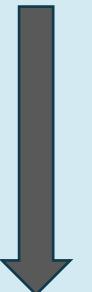
(15.7% of PPJ)



Early

Mid

Late



Scepticism hardened

Balanced Participants

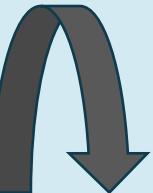
(28.9% of PPJ)



Early

Mid

Late



Mid-year lift, then drop

Community Anchors

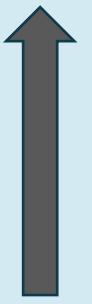
(40.9% of PPJ)



Early

Mid

Late



Pride and positivity grew

Lessons learned

Public communication must work from day one

People need a clear calendar and accessible information to navigate cultural offers

Regional activation needs coordinated support

Wider reach works when local partners, digital access, and organisation align early

**Different groups engage for different reasons**

Participation varies by habits and priorities; outreach must reflect these differences

Youth engagement requires continuity

Disengaged young people rarely shift behaviour without long-term, predictable structures

Findings Key Priority “Connections and Capacity”

By Dr Veronika Vakulenko

Achievements

Based on:
Cultural projects report – 26 interviews
Program event report – 214 responses to questionnaire

Competence



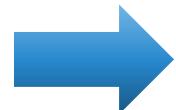
Developing the skills of artists and cultural workers.

Connections



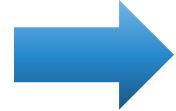
Cooperation (across the region, artistic disciplines, internationally, between amateurs and professionals).

Culture



Shared history, identity, and values to strengthen cohesion and belonging.

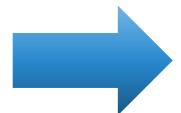
Character



Supporting personal development, resilience, and growth among cultural actors.

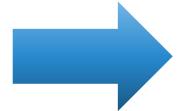
Achievements

Competence



87% of program events contributed to the development of skills and competencies.
Developed skills in **budgeting, reporting**, and applying for **international funding**.

Connections



12,300 performer engagements, including **3,000 international performers (57 countries)**;
54% of program events included **amateur performers**;
33% of performers under 30;
90% of program events had **cross-sector collaboration**;
700+ partnerships formed;
UNG2024 and **Frivillig2024** as region-wide initiatives, with youth and volunteer networks established in **over 20 municipalities**.

Culture

Character





Frivillig på Værøy
Photo by Arina Karbovskaya



Internasjonal Fest
Photo by Arina Karbovskaya

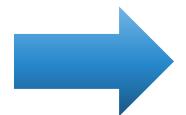


Arts of Democracy conference
Photo by David Engmo / Bodø2024

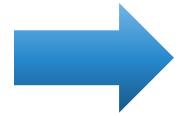


Arctic Food project
Photo by Kathrine Sørgård / Bodø2024

Culture



“Via Querinissima” and integration into the **International Network of Eco-Regions** contributed by linking Nordland to broader European heritage and cultural networks and marked Nordland on a **cultural route** and as an **eco-region** with increasing international visibility and collaboration.



Utopia workshops across 20+ municipalities. Citizens including youth discussed local values and democratic futures fostering **bottom-up dialogue** and **civic engagement**.

Character

“Feeding Europe” and **“Arts of Democracy”** enabled local professionals to scale up their work and gain access to international collaborative spaces.

Lessons learned

1. Mission possible!

Structures **established**, connections **enhanced** and skills **strengthened**.

2. Communication as a capacity

Without **clear, early, and inclusive communication** between the ECoC team and event organizers/cultural projects' leaders, opportunities can be unevenly distributed and limited for several, especially in a large region like Nordland.

3. Legacy of networks

- ✓ Some promising initiatives: **Volunteer Bodø, Youth networks, Ecological Economics in schools, and Bodø2024 Legacy AS.**
- ✓ **Long-term impact and legacy are** conditional, uneven, and fragile.
- ✓ **Networks**, which generate capacities and connections, can serve as catalysts for long-term change when supported by other elements of cultural ecosystem (resources, governance, and community participation).



A project leader:

*“Legacy is about networks.
It is the people remaining in the
networks and all the competency
that is there.”*

Findings: Key Priority “City Development”

By Dr Alena Nelaeva

Achievements

Tourism boom in Nordland

- 25%↑ (Norwegian tourists)
- 44%↑ (International tourists)
- 31%↑ (Guest nights among Norwegian tourists)
- 79%↑ (Guest nights among international tourists)

Sustained collaborations with international artists

- 3000 international performer engagements
- 57 countries
- every second event of the program

Extended cultural program

- 434 program events
- Broad genre diversity (art, music, nature, youth, Sámi themes)

Use of unconventional spaces and outdoor venues.

- 11% of the program events being held in nature



Bodø 2024/
Arina Karbovskaya

Culture-related job vacancies

- 40% increase in culture-related job vacancies in Nordland.
- 0.4% of total job vacancies in 2024 vs. 0.49% in 2019



Bodø 2024 / David Engmo

Lessons learned

No data on formal integration of culture into municipal urban planning.

No data on policy changes or planning frameworks influenced by Bodø2024 ECoC

Citizens and artists still lack cultural spaces, meeting places for artists, pop-up exhibitions, lively environment and cultural community that supports artists.



*"There are many who have contacted us over the past year [2024] - artists and cultural actors who **want to move to Bodø**. Many have gotten to the point where they looked at housing, but they stopped because they **couldn't find a studio [cultural infrastructure]**. It's also about **community and a place to meet, and a place to create art**. But what has happened in the last six months is that many people have started to leave. **They are leaving because they can't find that community.**" (Artist)*

Findings: Key Priority “Freedom of Expression”

By Dr Anastasiya Henk

Symbolism vs Genuine Inclusion

*Mega-cultural events amplify existing tensions.
Inclusion must reach beyond visibility.*

Achievements

- Strong Sámi visibility in central programme events
- Broad mobilisation through more than 600 volunteers and 36 language groups
- Rich international collaborations with censored and displaced artists
- Arenas for democratic reflection through Arts of Democracy, De(con)fining and Festival of Freedom

Challenges

- Polarised reactions and contested representation in digital arenas
- Limited influence for minority contributors and low audience mixing
- Low cultural mobility across local communities
- Fragmented debate driven by emotionally charged online exchanges



Bodø 2024 /
Arina Karbovskaya



Bodø 2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

Sources: Baseline report, Norwegian media – AI-assisted analysis, Program event report, Artists/Cultural worker report, Volunteers report, Social media report

Communication

Meaning takes shape through explanation, dialogue and the channels used.

Achievements

- High engagement with controversial themes
- Strong media attention to provocative and experimental art



Bodø 2024 / David Engmo

Challenges

- Weak framing of freedom of expression as a democratic principle
- Limited communication linking artistic work to democratic values and free expression



Bodø 2024 / Airida Bekeryte



Bodø 2024 / Airida Bekeryte



Bodø 2024 / David Engmo



Bodø 2024 / Jamal Khawaja

Institutionalisation

Cultural democracy requires lasting structures that continue beyond an event year.

Achievements

- Democratic impact through Ecological Economics as a new school subject
- Platforms that supported persecuted and displaced artists during the title year

Challenges

- Fragile anchoring that depends on long-term policy and structural support
- Absence of durable frameworks for continued protection and collaboration

Long-term potential socio-economic effects of Bodø2024 ECOC for Bodø municipality

By Dr Evgeni Vinogradov



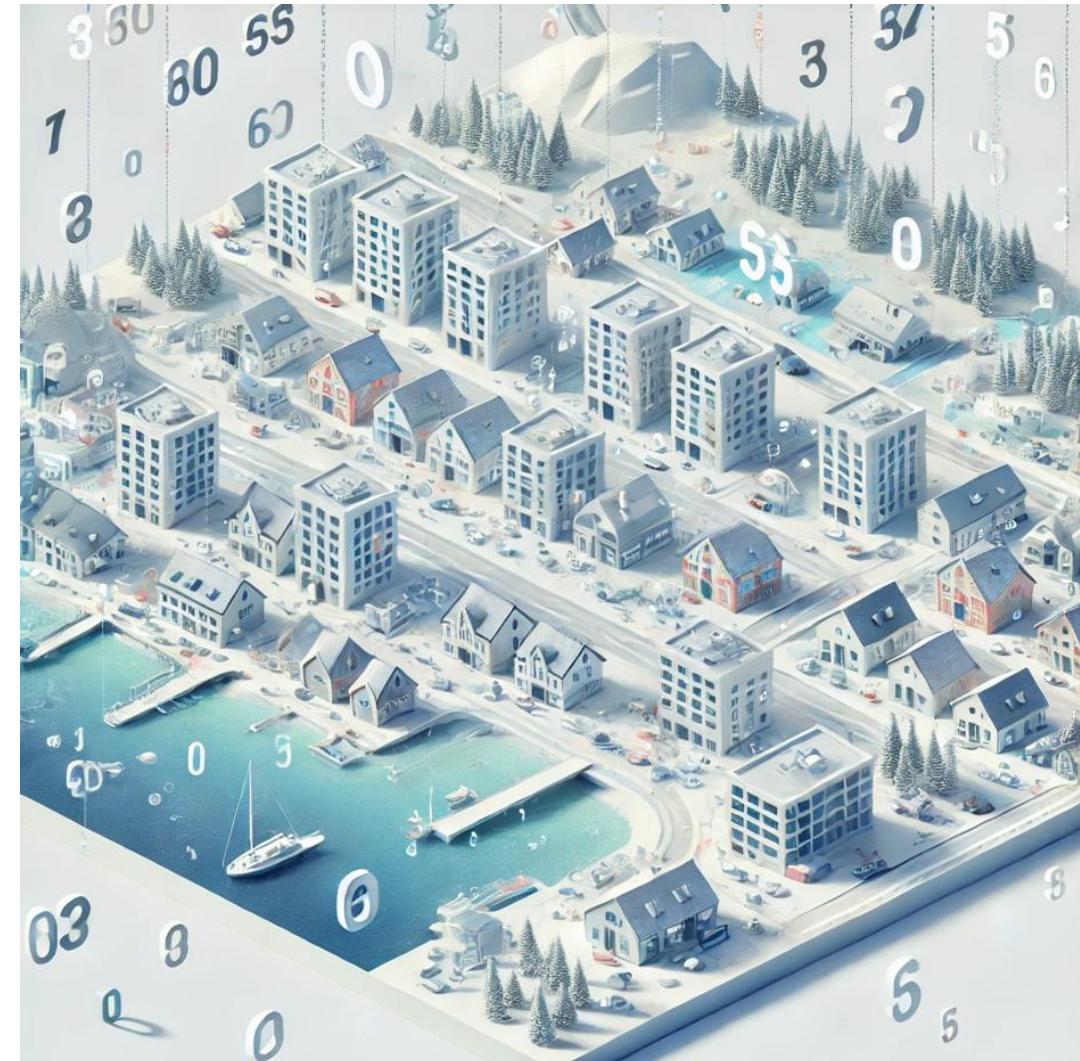
EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

Socio-economic effects 12 years ahead?

“Digital Twin” of Bodø:

- 52,802 individuals,
- 25,560 households,
- 32,019 apartments, houses, industrial buildings and other real estate properties,
- 1,250 organizations with 24,779 working places.

= “SimCity” based on 20 Gb actual data



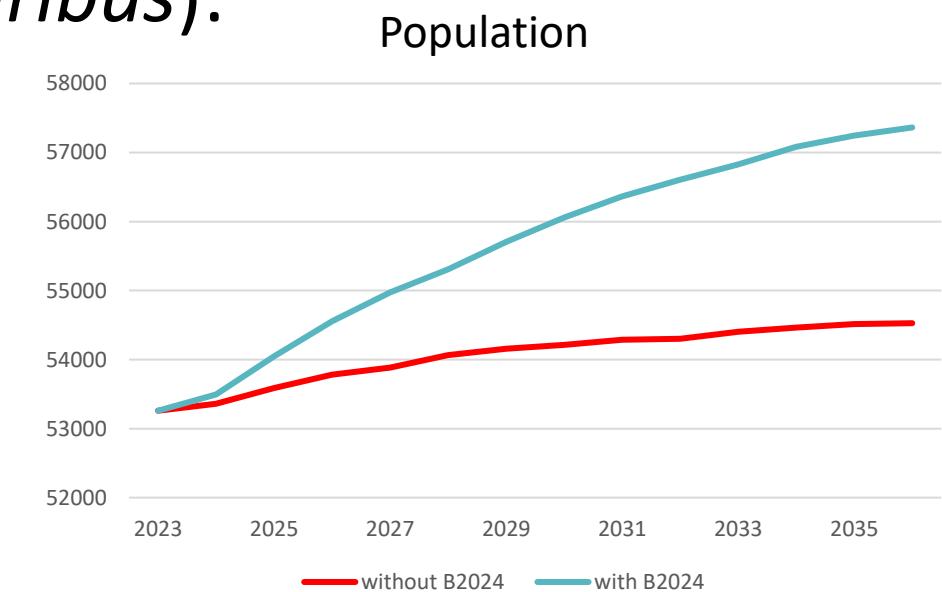
1. Scenarios made before Bodø 2024 (Scenario report):

- “Success”: all events 100% booked, 30% more tourists
- “Failure”: events 20% booked, 6% more tourists

2. Actual results of Bodø 2024: the “success+” scenario

3. Simulated effects by 2036 (*ceteris paribus*):

- + 2 836 inhabitants:
- + 184 kindergarten kids
- + 394 primary school students
- + 70 secondary school students
- + 336 university students
- + 1477 working places
- + 425 retired
- + EUR 100 mil. additional accumulated turnover for local firms and organizations



MONITOR 2024 OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF BODØ2024 ECOC

Summary

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Our assessment is that Bodø2024 ECOC contributed significantly to:
 - ❑ cultural activation,
 - ❑ youth empowerment,
 - ❑ capacity building,
 - ❑ enhancing the visibility and pride of Bodø and Nordland.
- The mega-event delivered short-term cultural gains, fostering civic pride and international visibility.
- Bodø2024 is an important cultural milestone for Northern Norway.
- It succeeded in institutionalizing volunteer networks, youth programs, and cultural education initiatives.

CHALLENGES

- However, several key challenges should also be noted:
 - ❑ Debates around freedom of expression revealed deep social tensions within the local community.
 - ❑ While cultural engagement was acknowledged as an important factor in reducing outmigration, it cannot offset the primary drivers of this trend.
 - ❑ There was limited integration of culture into formal urban planning, along with weaknesses in public outreach and event information dissemination, which constrained audience engagement.
 - ❑ The legacy of many cultural initiatives launched during the title year will require stronger institutional anchoring and continued municipal support and funding.



MONITOR 2024 recommendations

LOCAL AND REGIONAL POLICYMAKERS

- **Recommendation 1.** Integrate cultural and rural/urban economic development strategies with a focus on young people.
- **Recommendation 2.** Support professional networks of artists and cultural workers through infrastructure development.
- **Recommendation 3.** Maintain and strategically expand engagement of the cultural volunteers.



EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE ECOCs

- **Implication 1.** Embed cultural policies in regional and urban development strategies.
- **Implication 2.** Plan early for ECOC legacy.
- **Implication 3.** Use data-driven methods for impact measurement and evidence-based governance.
- **Implication 4.** Ensure transparent governance of ECOC programs.
- **Implication 5.** Balance diverse cultural preferences.
- **Implication 6.** Comparative evaluations of ECOCs are beneficial. Learn from previous ECOCs.

Thank you for your attention!

More information:

(<https://site.nord.no/monitor2024>)

Contact information:

Project/research group leader:

Professor Dr Anatoli Bourmistrov

Office at HHN: A218

E-mail: Anatoli.Bourmistrov@nord.no



[Hjem](#) [Folkejury Bodø2024](#) [Om oss](#) [Referansegruppe](#) [News and Reports](#) [Final Conference](#) [English](#) ▾

We **monitor** the effects of Bodø2024



EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

In 2019, the city of Bodø was awarded **European Capital of Culture** (ECoC) status for 2024. Bodø2024 is the biggest cultural project that has been undertaken in Norway for several years. In 2024, over 600 different events will be held in Nordland. The project aims to reach over 500,000 visitors, strengthen the cultural life in Bodø and Nordland and contribute to increased well-being and life satisfaction.

The European Commission requires the organizer of the capital of culture (Bodø2024 IKS) to carry out an evaluation of the project. Bodø2024 has therefore entered into an agreement with Nord University regarding the evaluation of Bodø as a capital of culture. This evaluation will be carried out by a group of **researchers** connected to the Nord University Business School, in the project «**Monitor2024 – Effects of Bodø as European Capital of Culture**».

In the evaluation, we will describe and explain both short-term and long-term effects of Bodø2024. The evaluation is based on the European Commission's framework and will entail the use of several different data sources and methods to map changes in Bodø and Nordland. This will allow us to examine whether the goals for the capital of culture project, set out in **the framework by the European Commission (2018)**, are being achieved. We will also investigate whether Bodø2024 leads to changes in cultural life and whether this has positive effects for the population, as well as urban and regional development.