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INTRODUCTION

6 months before our official Opening in 2024, we are on the final stretch of our preparations. The past few years have been turbulent, busy and challenging. But they have also been very inspiring and rewarding because significant changes in the cultural life of the region are already starting to show.

Implementing a format such as the European Capital of Culture in an alpine rural area like the Salzkammergut remains a challenge. Our beautiful but complex region is characterised by strong identities, stubbornness and insistence on traditions which isn't always making a future-oriented path self-evident. Nevertheless, we have managed to connect 23 municipalities and thus two federal states. We have brought together mayors and political representatives to jointly address issues and problems of the region.

With its artistically diverse programme, the European Capital of Culture Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 aims to open up the Salzkammergut to the world and create a sustainable cultural network within the region and beyond. We show that rural areas have prospects for the future in every respect and can be put on an equal footing with urban space, culturally as well as economically.

We are certain that the Salzkammergut can become a model for a united Europe that fosters a sustainable and careful use of its natural and cultural resources – a model region in which the common is placed above the divisive and in which one's own and the others' world views are seen as mutually enriching. Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 will contribute to showing that tolerance as well as the willingness to engage with others and their points of view are the only sustainable basis of our living together – while constantly engaging in a dialogue with Europe and the world by means of the programmed artistic and cultural interventions.

IMPRESSUM

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"23 for 24" © Rudi Kain Photographie

A

LONG TERM STRATEGY

The long-term strategy of our bidding and implementation process was guided by the principle of "People, Places, Programme". In the framework of these fields, we wanted to balance out tradition and modernisation, familiarities and new challenges and develop a sustainable way of appreciating nature but not destroying it.

In delivering our vision, there have been many challenges. The path towards the goal of uniting 23 municipalities through art and culture has been and still is not easy. No ECoC is. First of all, the infrastructure that could facilitate an easy implementation is not in place (e.g. well-equipped museums, functioning theatres, exhibition spaces, etc.). Furthermore, it is a challenge to source and retain qualified personnel as they are rarely located in rural areas or – if not – willing to move to more peripheral regions harder to reach for the duration of the project. While developing our programme, we have been confronted with a variety of strong opinions. There have been disputes, misunderstandings and even fisticuffs in a pub starting from a discussion about the question whether and how Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 should deal with Remembrance Culture. Such events show that – while laying the foundation of this European Capital of Culture – its architects have already exposed some fault lines and tectonic fractures.

Organising our activities around the fields of action People, Places and Programme has helped us to keep a steady focus on the involvement of the people in the region and on its cultural infrastructure whilst strengthening regional and international networks and consolidating a more diversified cultural offer.

In the field of **People** we focus on:

- Building capacity among cultural workers, artists and people realising cultural activities (often on a voluntary basis)
- Diversifying audiences and fostering participation in order to make culture more accessible
- Encouraging people to explore new things when it comes to cultural activities

In the field of **Places** we focus on:

- Activating vacant places
- Organising cultural events in unusual places
- Refurbishing key venues (in partnership with municipalities and other public entities)

In the field of **Programme (connecting People and Places)** we focus on:

- Organising artistically diverse events of high quality
- Strengthening a broader definition of culture in the region
- Supporting art forms which are not yet well anchored.

More detail on each of these 3 strategic pillars is contained in, respectively, D – Outreach (People), C – Capacity to Deliver (Places) and B – Programme. By way of a strategic overview, here are just a few points about how each of these pillars helps us deliver a long-term strategy, impacting well beyond 2024.

People has been very much focussed on broadening engagement and building capacity across the region. We define Capacity Building as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, processes and resources that organisations and communities need to face future challenges of the region and beyond. One key project to reach this goal is called **Modular Culture – Workshops about Working with Culture**. Aimed at people from all age groups and backgrounds working in the field of culture, it proposes a series of workshops around different topics (cultural project management, EU funding programmes, marketing, controlling, evaluation insurance, etc.). So far, over 90 people have gained profound knowledge about cultural management in these workshops. Furthermore, through collaborations with educational institutions, Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 seeks to impart knowledge through art and culture and to build sustainable knowledge structures (see D – Outreach).

The aim of diversifying audiences, encouraging participation and ensuring accessibility to cultural events was further pursued with a number of projects maintaining a highly participatory approach. A few examples are the **Fête de la Musique/ European Music and Mobility Day, Salzkammer Hall/Sound, Folk Fest, Art Your Village** or **Culturebuddies**.

Places has gained enormous relevance. While the intention to reactivate vacancies had already accompanied us since the bidding phase, we became especially active in this area last year. We have commissioned the collective "Curating Space" to survey all unused or underused places throughout the Salzkammergut region which are suitable for artistic and cultural use. The survey ended up listing a total of 300 vacant places and has also been made available to the regional cultural scene. In this way, many unused places can be reactivated through cultural or social events.

We carried out this audit of vacancies to help us organise cultural events in unusual places (e.g. industrial sites, quarries, mountain huts, a school garden, platforms and boats on water, the ice cave of the Dachstein glacier,...). We found that many train stations are left empty in our region. And yet, they are the first places visitors and tourists see when coming here. Thus, the A.I.R. programme **Salt Lake Cities** was further developed to allow international artists to work in the vacant train stations.



Folk Fest © Franz Kreis

More detail on how we used and developed our infrastructure is shown in C – Capacity to Deliver.

On **Programme**, the following section describes in detail the progress we have made. The programme has already been finalised. It includes 178 projects (and over 100 Associated Projects), brings a large diversity of high-quality events and projects to the region, including unprecedented formats which strengthen the broad term of culture in the region – one of the anchors of our strategy. The programme shows that wide parts of our everyday lives are related to culture. This includes how we live, eat and travel, how we deal with our resources, how we remember the past, create the future and much more.

Yet, the programme has not been developed solely for the year of 2024. Many projects have been conceived with a long-term perspective, using the title European Capital of Culture as a vehicle to set the basis for a sustainable development. Some of these projects are described below in connection with our legacy planning.

The aim of a sustainable and lasting effect of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is also reflected in the cultural development plan **Cultural Vision Salzkammergut 2030**, published shortly after the final Bidbook was submitted. Besides the strategic pillars of People, Places, Programme, **Cultural Vision Salzkammergut 2030** has outlined the following fields and topics to focus on and invest in when planning the longer-term development of the region: Cultural Tourism, Mobility (Public Transport), Contemporary History and Remembrance Culture, Building Culture in rural areas, Culture & Nature, Subculture, Education (as part of Capacity Building) and a Dynamic Approach to Tradition. These thematic fields are now coming to life through the ECoC activities and are, in this way, linking the programme of 2024 to our long-term strategy for the region.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Our Evaluation and Monitoring strategy is focusing on the period from 2023 to 2025. We are currently requesting basic data from local cultural initiatives, museums, schools, local tourism businesses and gastronomy businesses. They provide us with visitor numbers, their origin and partly their age structure. Above all, we are asking manufacturing and gastronomic businesses whether they already fulfil the criteria of ecological sustainability.

The work of the ECoC Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is likely to show effects in the fields of action of the above-mentioned **Cultural Vision Salzkammergut 2030**. Using an impact model that has already been scientifically tested, various stakeholder groups are identified and ranked according to their likelihood of impact by a panel of external ECoC experts.

In collaboration with the Vienna University of Economics and Business and other scientific institutes, (University of Innsbruck, Institute for Organization and Learning, Institutes of European Ethnology of University of Graz, Innsbruck, Vienna, Klagenfurt) we are currently finalising the strategy of our long-term evaluation. Together with experts from relevant stakeholder groups, potential surrounding effects of the ECoC were elicited, which are now being prioritised by means of an impact model. What we measure here is how the banner city, the ECoC region and further surrounding areas are affected by the ECoC economically, socially, culturally and structurally. A focus is put on cultural institutions, the regional population, people working in the arts and culture, tourists, tourism businesses and the multi-local population (such as potential returnees).

Some effects of the title year's build-up are already evident, for example the already perceivable increasing internationalisation.

on of artistic and cultural institutions. Associations located in the ECoC region are implementing EU-funded projects for the first time and/or submitting applications as full partners. These additional budgetary resources make it possible even for small organisations and municipalities to implement projects of international significance. Artists and cultural managers are expanding their (professional) networks on a European and international level and are building long-term partnerships.

As we are pushing forward our much broader cultural concept, we are also observing that the stakeholder group of the regional population can take advantage of a more diverse cultural programme, being increasingly encouraged to participate in art and culture.

These and other effects are being continuously researched as well as supported by field studies by the Competence Centre for Nonprofit Organisations and Social Entrepreneurship at the Vienna University of Economics and Business.

Legacy Planning

After the title year, the Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut 2024 GmbH will be liquidated in 2025 or 2026. Our “banner city” Bad Ischl will be its legal successor and take over the remaining agendas, although more work is still needed to clarify exactly the form this legacy organisation will take. We will continue to advocate for the best possible long-term solution to continue the work Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 has initiated in the region.

However, very positive dynamics have been happening on the project level, such as **CONNECT – Digital and Green Skills for sculpture**, a legacy project originating from **Salzkammergut Craft Art Lab (SCALA)** and proving that artists and cultural professionals in the region are very much interested in keeping the energy of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 alive.

The following example projects also show how much of the work we started can continue beyond 2024, irrespective of the organisational model:

City of Ceramics: The city of Gmunden will become a centre for already established and future ceramic artists and experts as well as ceramics enthusiasts from Austria and abroad. Gmunden is now an official candidate to become a “UNESCO Creative City” and to be integrated in the “European Route of Ceramics”.

SCALA: The Salzkammergut Craft Art Lab was developed as one of the ECoC legacy actions, creating an international platform to explore new ways between craft and art.

Salzkammerqueer: The first queer community building project in a rural alpine region establishes a broad international network and connects people and initiatives pursuing similar goals of tolerance and diversity. The project is currently net-

working with European partners such as Chemnitz 2025 and Pro Progressione (Hungary) in order to initiate an EU application when suitable calls open.

Next Generation You is drawing attention to the needs of young people and makes their ideas and visions visible. Municipalities are encouraged to continue supporting the projects and ideas of the young people even after 2024. The project Girls’ and Women’s Football (working title) also strengthens the regional network beyond 2024. It aims to connect various regional clubs between each other and with other institutions from Austria and Europe.

Forum Thinking the Future – Back to the Future: Empires as Shapers of the World Order: The topic of this project is closely linked to perspectives on the future of the region and of Europe as a global player.

The Big Green Project (Creative Europe funded) with 25 international partners will continue until 2027. The contribution of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 will be completed by 2025, but we are currently working on possibilities to stay involved in the project.

SKUL Culture Wednesday: In this project, schools are encouraged to teach arts and culture in regular classes. An exchange platform for cultural and artistic methods for educational institutions developed in this project will be established in 2024 to be used and expanded in the future.

Various regional associations have managed to build up their capacity and some have taken part in EU submissions for the first time. We hope that many successful submissions will follow, so that the legacy of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 will continue to inspire local cultural institutions even after the title year. Our activation of vacant train stations will hopefully serve as an impetus for those projects to be continued after 2024. Further infrastructure projects like the refurbishment of the Lehár Theater or the transformation of the Sudhaus into a cultural centre will influence the region positively in the future (see C – Capacity to Deliver).

Finally, in our team we have done our bit to continue and grow our Salty Family as four members of the team are currently on maternity leave!

B

PROGRAMME AND EUROPEAN DIMENSION

In this section, both the development of our programme, our programme lines and some flagship projects are described, together with how the European Dimension is represented in the programme.

We believe that we have stayed true to the original Bidbook vision: to develop a cultural movement which both respects traditions and creates new ones. At a time of rising isolationism and deepening rifts, art and culture can be the only instruments that tame these centrifugal forces and help to bridge the rifts that have been torn open.

Let’s be honest: those rifts can be extensive and the challenges we needed to overcome were manifold, ranging from the questioning of ingrained concepts and ideas, utterances like “mirsanmir – we don’t need anyone from the outside” to accusations of cultural appropriation when encounters between international and local artists were organised. Politicians interfered surprisingly little, except when critical questions came up in local council meetings. Nevertheless, any attempts to exert influence on the project had no impact on the content or programme of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024. We remained defiantly independent!

The waters were smoothed when we started to present our programme individually to all the municipalities and their inhabitants between March and July 2023 (see Communication and Marketing). By doing so, we explained (again) the purpose of a European Capital of Culture. Many realise now that participating in the 2024 programme can boost and have a lasting and strongly beneficial effect on their municipality. In many cases, it has helped that approximately 84% of all projects are led by regional artists and cultural institutions in dialogue with international artists and cultural professionals.

We firmly believe that our programme will offer a multitude of opportunities to share, question and, hopefully, also expand the well-cultivated characteristics and traditions of the region as well as different prevailing points of view. The goal here is not to abolish these many characteristics, but to unite them into a larger sense of community. This is exactly what the 23 municipalities of the Salzkammergut have exemplified and why Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 has the potential to become a model for rural parts of Europe: a community of municipalities in which similarities are placed above differences and

where one’s own world view is understood as an enriching part of a mosaic, constructing a big common picture.

For us, the European Capital of Culture project is not a short-term event, but a longer-term process that has a clear purpose. It is about creating a platform where residents of the region can discover and share their culture and history. The numerous events and projects of the ECoC programme are intended to help create an open and inclusive atmosphere in which everyone feels welcome and can share their own perspective. It is not only about entertainment and pleasure, but also about initiating critical discussions and creating a space for reflection and exchange. Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is thus not a place of escapism, but of encounter and dialogue where residents can shape their future together.

This conviction also determines our programme. Organised within our four programme lines, we have, as of August 2023, curated 178 projects, 11 of which have already been completed. Furthermore, over 100 Associated Projects are part of our programme to bring even more projects to the public’s attention and show points of contact to our programme. More Associated Projects in line with the philosophy of our programme might still be included in the future. In the framework of our projects, we are trying to connect multiple municipalities and to support the establishment of an interlinked network. In a lot of the curated projects, multiple municipalities are working together and thus creating points of contact, around 10 projects include all 23 municipalities.

In our last Monitoring Report, we have presented a slight change of programme lines. Since then, no further changes have been made. It was important to us to clearly define the dramaturgy of each of the programme lines which build on each other: the examination of the first programme line leads to the second one, the second one to the third one, and the quintessence of all programme lines is clearly reflected in the fourth one. They tell, intertwined, the possibility of what Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 can offer in a rural region, as a message to Europe:

Power and Tradition

In dealing with Remembrance Culture (programme line **Power and Tradition**), among others regarding the House of Habsburg as well as the era of National Socialism, we have decided to make historical themes and difficult topics emotionally accessible through artistic interventions. Instead of organising symposia and panel discussions, which usually touch on sore points, artistic interventions do not have a moralising effect and therefore enable a more sensitive approach to the historically dark past and the identities constructed in relation to it, for example in **Tours by WillyFred!** (history cycling project). The history of the region is treated from artistic perspectives in a critical way in projects like **The Journey of the Paintings** or **Back then? Hands On! Salzkammergut** or **Folk Fest** and other projects are exploring local traditions.

We have given primarily female artists a voice to address these issues, in relevant historical locations, such as the tunnels at the former concentration camp in Ebensee, the stables of the Emperor's villa in Bad Ischl or Lake Toplitz in Grundlsee. Some examples of participating and exhibited artists are: Lisel Salzer (Jewish artist who had to emigrate to the US), Selma Selman (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Valie Export (Austria), Chiharu Shiotata (Japan), Katharina Cibulka (Austria), Ceija Stojka (Roma), Eva Schlegel (Austria), Ruth Schnell (Austria) and Ella Raidel (Austria/Singapore). In this way, an artistic "women's line" was created unobtrusively and incidentally, representing a counterpoint to the quite patriarchal society in the Salzkammergut.

To introduce the year of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 and to offer a first taste of the programme, some events have already been organised in the context of Remembrance Culture: salon concerts, dealing with the theme of lost female composers and a series of readings on Stefan Zweig who, at the beginning of the 20th century, already wrote about the idea of a united Europe contributing to peace and mutual cultural understanding. By means of these events, we could demonstrate the urgency of renovating the Lehar Theater in Bad Ischl, but also the relaunch of the Bad Ischl town museum (Museum der Stadt Bad Ischl, "Hotel Austria"), which had halted telling the town's history in 1914.

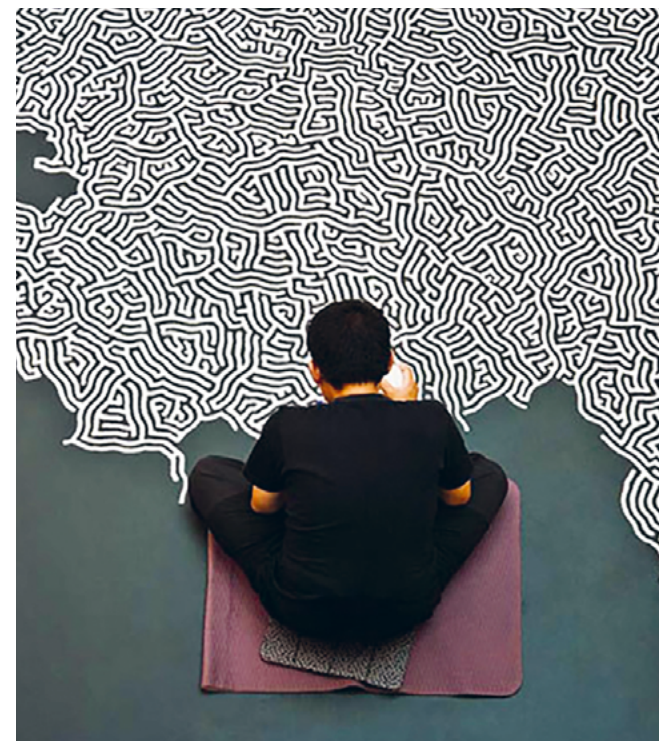
Another related focus is provenance research: The attempt to scientifically evaluate the collection of the Jewish industrialist Konrad Mautner by the Commission for Provenance Research (as part of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport) failed due to a municipal decision. We have therefore sought a participative artistic solution to bring the issue to the public attention. The project **The Unheard Things – Another Kind of Provenance Research**, a collaboration between the historians and scientists Monika Löscher and Birgit Johler and the theatre collective Theater im Bahnhof (Graz), deals with looted art and everyday objects formerly in Jewish possession. Furthermore, an exhibition on the history of Konrad Mautner and his family will be presented as an Associated Project at the Joanneum Graz and at the Kaiserlicher Stall in Grundlsee.

Culture in Motion

Our second programme line **Culture in Motion** stands for contemporary art and new cultural formats.

The installation **Silent Echoes: Dachstein** by the American artist Bill Fontana will bring the bells of Notre-Dame into the ice caves of the Dachstein and, vice versa, transport the sounds of the melting ice to France. This will be a cooperation with the Centre Pompidou, Ircam, Ars Electronica, Joanneum Graz, Museumsquartier Vienna and the newly founded Goiserer Musiktage. Bill Fontana's work highlights with sensitivity the fragility of natural (the disappearance of the glacier) and cultural resources (e.g. the fire of Notre-Dame, a symbol of European culture that shook the world).

The **New Salt Festival**, an alternative and electronic music and digital arts festival brings new formats and art forms to the region and re-evaluates tradition. The Artist in Residence programme **Salt Lake Cities** invites young contemporary artists to revitalise vacant train stations in the region with new and modern art forms. Through this we are able to encourage target groups who do not yet participate in arts and culture in the region.



Motoi Yamamoto © Mitchell Kearney

A deeper focus on youth has been carved out in the last year through our framework of **Culture in Motion** and when the youth programme **Next Generation You** was launched. By developing and carrying out their own ideas and projects, groups of young people are exploring what they expect from the future as well as their visions for the region. Small-scale culture and art projects make their needs and visions visible and allow them to manage their project budgets and curation self-responsibly. In D – Outreach, we also describe how different projects invite young people to examine their future career prospects.

Sharing Salzkammergut – The Art of Travelling

Supporting a more sustainable model of cultural tourism is still a central part of our cultural vision. This programme line recasts tourism as **The Art of Travelling**. It aims to initiate a deceleration, to spread tourists' travelling to the region throughout the whole year, to provide tourist offers that encourage people to linger, to sustainably respect nature and residents. Our programming with a focus on the entire region (not only Bad Ischl) and also our intention to focus on increasing the

number of overnight stays and encouraging greater occupancy during the low seasons forms the basis for a new cultural tourism model to be established in 2024. More detail on some of the tourism infrastructure plans is presented in C – Capacity to Deliver.

At the programme level, a curatorial "Pearl Necklace of Museums" has been created to connect several museums in the region to move them into the spotlight. Via a clever dramaturgical sequence, the story of salt mining is reconstructed (also rendering the construction of a new museum unnecessary). For this purpose, the app **7000 Years of Salt – The Salzkammergut Virtual Museum** is being developed, which not only tells the story of salt mining, but above all the trade and knowledge transfer associated with it.

The tourism experts of the Federal States of Upper Austria, Styria and also Salzburg followed our idea of **Sharing Salzkammergut** or as they now call it: "Salzkammergut connects" – considering travel as a way of exchanging different cultural understandings, developing a dialogue between cultures. Tourist offers that expand beyond the summer months are intended to make the region attractive all year round, but also to create an engaging cultural life (e.g. in the Lehar Theater in Bad Ischl, the future cultural centre Sudhaus in Bad Ischl, the KunstQuartier in Gmunden, the Hand.Werk.Haus in Bad Goisern, the new event location in Altaussee, or by internationalising and relaunching museums such as the Barthaus Museum of Calligraphy – formerly Barthaus Museum of Calligraphy and Local History).

We were also able to implement the **Fête de la Musique** in all 23 municipalities: a day without traffic in rural areas but with music taking over public spaces was already tested this year in some municipalities and will take place next year throughout Upper Austria. Furthermore, the exhibition **Tourism** by



Deconfining Reading © Edwin Husic

the Architekturzentrum Wien deals with social, ecological and economic aspects of tourism.

GLOBALLOCAL – Building the New

As mentioned in Section A – Long-Term Strategy, many vacant buildings will be made available to artists (such as the empty train stations along the Salzkammergut). Building Culture is crucial to sustainability. What materials can we build with in the future in a sustainable way? What spatial strategy do we follow, how do we avoid soil sealing and how do we revitalise empty spaces instead of building new ones? The big symposium **interventa Hallstatt 2024** is dedicated to the potential, the significance and the content-based spectrum of Building Culture as an expanded concept of culture in terms of history, tradition and the constructed and natural environment in the Salzkammergut region.

Ecological issues affect the rural area to a great extent and are a key topic in Europe and worldwide. A close cooperation with the Technical University of Vienna in the project **Land Protection in the Salzkammergut Region** serves to provide and discuss strategies of action both to locals and to those politically responsible. The water conference **Water is the Future Gold** will deal with the increasing water shortage, black spots of micro-farming will be the focus of the **Microfarmers Conference**.

In all the focal points mentioned above, the European Dimension applies, but also a global one: Europe can no longer view itself in a centralist way, but needs to reposition itself to a new geopolitical balance of powers – coming to terms with history and the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources. This is for example exemplified in the wide-ranging African-European cooperation project **Deconfining arts, culture and policies in Europe and Africa**.



The Great Space Walk © Christoph Viscorsum

It is, among other things, further discussed in the **World Salon**, which deals with various forms of migration, their effects or necessities, or in the **Forum Thinking the Future** where young people meet experts to develop a manifesto on how to think about the Europe of tomorrow.

Involving local artists and cultural organisations

Although the programme includes a high number of international artists, the curated projects are well anchored in the Salzkammergut region. Approximately 84% of all projects are produced by regional project holders. In this way, a basis for cooperation between local and international artists is created, which we consider as one of the most important aspects of our work. There is not only a high number but also a high diversity of regional cultural operators involved, addressing different target groups – among them:

- With their project **Radio Transfer – Communities in Dialogue**, the independent radio stations Freies Radio B138 and Freies Radio Salzkammergut represent the independent media community.
- The Salzkammergut Festwochen Gmunden, an important institution for traditional formats and contemporary art, with their projects **Hausmusik Roas**, **Home World** and **Interactive Secret Letters – All the Way Across Europe and Beyond** join the ECoC programme.
- The Jazzfreunde Bad Ischl are establishing a European Dimension in their programme for 2024 with their project **Tradition in Transition**.
- By means of the **European Peace Ride**, the bicycle club Bad Ischl connects sport, movement and culture. **Girls' and Women's Football** (working title) combines female empowerment, sport and various art forms.
- The Cinema Ebensee (Kino Ebensee) is telling a multi-faceted story of life and community in today's Europe through the multi-day international film festival **Let's live together! Communities and Culture on Screen**.

However, not only cultural organisations take part in the conception and implementation of our programme, schools are also playing an important role (see D – Outreach). Additionally, projects such as the **Fête de la Musique**, engage a broad public, everybody playing an instrument or singing is invited to take part.

Combining local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions

Craft projects in our programme (such as **SCALA**, **City of Ceramics**, **Drawing a Thread**) demonstrate how we combine cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new experimental expressions. All projects, developed from local history, are linked to international, contemporary positions. These are, however, not only juxtaposed, but brought into connection with

each other. Residencies as part of the projects allow for exchange and remove barriers.

The **Bartlhaus Museum of Calligraphy** will be relaunched and, in his exhibitions, will put a focus on calligraphy, reflecting on what writing means to humans. In 2024, an exhibition will show the works of international calligrapher Marina Soria (Argentina), Brody Neuenschwander (USA, Belgium), Wissam Shawkat (Iraq/United Arab Emirates) and Izzy Pludwinsky (Israel).

In the fields of performance and music, projects are creating a bridge between the traditional and the experimental as well. Within the framework of the newly conceived **Goiserer Music Days**, the previously traditional format is for the first time putting a focus on contemporary music, respectively on the topics of ecology, sustainability and music. **Folk Fest**, a participatory project about the art of celebration is uniting music, dance, traditional costumes and customs. It invites regional associations (mostly traditional music and dance associations) to experience and reflect on their own relationship to local but also global roots.

Digital and analogue

It has been our ambition since the start of this project to find a good balance between digital and analogue content. Digital formats in particular are not the most obvious thing to realise in the Salzkammergut which is still a very analogue region.

Nevertheless, in our finalised programme, we assemble a variety of formats. Some digital projects we are most excited about are: **From the Past into the Future** by Eva Schlegel, one of the most internationally renowned artists in Austria. In her project dealing with the idea of space and the relationship between image and language, digital augmented reality (AR) sculptures will become visible for visitors on their mobile phones. **The Great Space Walk** from the German artist Christoph Viscorsum is an audio artwork resulting from dialogues with hikers, experts in future studies, church visitors, alpine farmers and many more. **Regional_Express** from Ella Raidel (Austria/Singapore) proposes an acoustic-visual immersive narrative on the rail route from Attnang-Puchheim to Tauplitz which deals with the cultural and natural heritage of the region. While travelling by train, an immersive experience for a curated application and for virtual reality (360/AR) is currently being created in the form of a journey through time and memory.

The project **Silent Echoes: Dachstein** of connecting the ice caves of the Dachstein glacier to Notre-Dame de Paris was already mentioned. The **European Theatre Festival Bad Ischl** (supported by the European theatre network mitos21, with theatres from – among others – Germany, Sweden, Italy and Belgium) aims at creating a dialogue between local young and upcoming artists and the international theatre scene. The project **probably The Best Hotel in the World** proposes a solution to the problems of hyper tourism; it is made of air and sound –



The Big Green: Networking Event with 25 European Partners © Pro Progressione

and a head full of pure imagination. Audio tracks lead the guests through the hotel and simulate a stay in the region. In contrast, many projects are through and through analogue, characterised by people coming together. These projects are, for example, the **Analog Festival**, **Tavern Lab** or the **Fête de la Musique**. And yet, even our digital projects are containing connective elements, as visitors can find themselves sitting at an imaginative bar with a stranger at probably **The Best Hotel in the World** or in a tavern joining the **European Theatre Festival Bad Ischl: Public Viewings**.

Opening Up to the Region, Europe and the World

The Opening of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is planned for 19 to 21 January 2024, with the official Opening Ceremony taking place on the 20th of January. There will be a variety of artistic interventions including different artforms like performances, dance, an operetta or installations.

To introduce the Opening Weekend, artistic interventions will be happening in trains passing through the Salzkammergut from Attnang-Puchheim to Stainach-Irdning (fashion shows, international culinary interventions, music, etc.). Furthermore, we will already present the projects enlivening the vacant railway stations along this route during the title year.

On the eve of the ceremony, a series of activities, previews and interventions involving regional artists, associations and societies are intended to create a buzz in all 23 participating municipalities. There will be a preview of the programme for politicians, members of the ECoC family and other VIPs (early access to the exhibition in the Sudhaus and the Ballet Mécanique installation at the Lehár Theatre).

It has been an obvious decision to put an emphasis on artistic and musical expression for the Opening by including performances from – among others – Hubert von Goisern with a choir composed of 1.000 singers and Conchita Wurst, Doris Uhllich with international dancers, concerts by Sofia Asgatovna

Gubaidulina and Georges Antheil, installations by Katharina Cibulka, Ruth Schnell, etc. In addition, the operetta “Eine Frau, die weiß, was sie will” by Oscar Strauss and directed by Barrie Koskie will be performed on 20 and 21 January 2024. The day will be closed by musical interventions of international artists (e.g. Duo Ruut from Estonia) in various locations in Bad Ischl with the possibility to dance and celebrate together. To conclude the Opening Weekend, on 21 January, a so-called “Katerfrühstück” (Hangover Breakfast) and the first World Salon of our programme will be organised. This event has developed out of the conference “Europe of the Regions” and will be called **“Europe in Transition: a Europe of National States versus a Europe of Regions”**: it is planned that Robert Menasse, Aleida Assmann, Fiston Mwanza Mujila, Juli Zeh and Herta Müller will reflect on the current geopolitical position and future development of Europe in the world from an artistic and scientific point of view.

By curating a variety of international artists in the framework of the Opening Weekend, Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 will demonstrate from the very start that an important network between regional, national and international artists has already been established.

A diverse programme of high artistic quality

Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024's programme offers a mix of formats, serious, entertaining, immersive, participatory or discourse-oriented.

Before projects are approved by the artistic team, they must be submitted to the Controlling Advisory Board for approval, including a detailed project plan and the project's budget. This, together with regular controlling, ensures that the high quality of the projects is checked, maintained and guaranteed.

The entire programme of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 can be found online at: www.salzkammergut-2024.at/en/projekte

EUROPEAN DIMENSION

As stated in the core programme text above, it is our concern to always view our actions from a European and global perspective. As a result, the following topics have emerged particularly strongly:

Remembrance Culture is the focus of several projects. The project **Back then?** asks: What does it mean to be human? What does the Nazi era have to do with us and the world today? It encourages people to talk about the Nazi era, to listen and to ask questions. **Back then?** tests, researches and develops participative methods and offers in public space. The **European Theatre Festival Bad Ischl** will deal with Remembrance Culture from today's perspective, including interpreting Stefan Zweig's speech on Europe from different angles.

As described previously, a high number of projects in our programme deal with ecological questions. At the same time, it is our conviction and approach to address the issue of human-made climate change in an international dialogue. **The Big Green Project** brings climate protection up to the European level. As part of a Creative Europe project, theatre houses, research institutions, art collectives and ECoC organisations are joining forces to form a big green initiative that aims to accompany climate change in artistic and cultural forms.

Other project examples are: **Water is the Future Gold: the Somewhat Different Climate Conference, Microfarmers Conference, Acta Liquida** (transdisciplinary art project about fish, ecosystem water and climate change), **Gravity and Growth** (artistic project in an alpine botanical garden in Bad Aussee), **The Temporal Forest** (art & science projection of forest change caused by humans), **Garden of the Healing Powers** (participatory artistic garden project by the School for Social and Economic Professions HLW Bad Ischl), or **Simple Smart Buildings** (participatory project on Building Culture during climate crisis and the use of ecological materials).

Other current European themes affecting most rural areas are tackled in the projects **RURASMUS**, which offers a semester on the countryside for international students, working together with the municipalities of the Salzkammergut region on their individual challenges, or **Tavern Lab**, which aims at finding alternatives to the slowly dying tavern culture in rural areas.

The future of Europe is treated in several projects such as **Forum Thinking the Future** (see A – Long-Term Strategy) or the **World Salon** on Migration and History which takes up the idea of the historical salon concept as a social meeting place between the public and private spheres, as a place of exchange on topics such as politics, culture and economics. The topic of migration will also be dealt with in the film productions **Behind the Scenes** (accompanying people from different parts of Europe and Africa who migrated to the Salzkammergut and are now working in the tourism sector) and **The Tree** (telling

the story of a Palestinian who moved to Bad Goisern in the Salzkammergut).

Promotion of cultural diversity in Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding

The Creative Europe project **Deconfining arts, culture and policies in Europe and Africa** makes a contribution to a sustainable, fair intercontinental cultural exchange and develops a new narrative for an integrative future, contributing to the EU strategy for international cultural relationships.

The project **Art your Village** is enabling the exchange of international artistic points of view, **Salzkammerqueer** is promoting diversity, equality and inclusion.

Radio Transfer – Communities in Dialogue is a networking project of Austria's independent media with European and African partners and institutions. In 2024, Freies Radio Salzkammergut and Freies Radio B138 will simultaneously invite radio producers from Hungary and a group from Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to a one-week residency. During the residencies, regular public events will take place.

Prosperity Afterparty is an international networking project with the participation of Novi Sad 2022, Veszprém 2023, Timișoara 2023 and Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024. Departing from lake Grundlsee, a floating sculpture will travel down the Danube towards Romania to collect impressions, stories, images and sounds along the historically charged waterway and to connect people living in the Danube Region.

European artists, cooperation with operators or cities in different countries

Almost all of our projects involve international artists or institutions. At this time, international artists from around 50 countries are represented in our programme.

A few examples of projects specifically characterised by international exchange are:

The A.I.R. programme **Salt Lake Cities**, which invites various international artists to research, work and present their artistic contribution in vacant train stations. The exhibition **Sudhaus. Art with Salt and Water** invites international artists to develop artistic positions regarding the elements salt, water and wood. The **Analog Festival** presents international artists proposing artistic strategies to slow down our digitised and electrified world. In **Art Your Village**, mostly international artists work in collaboration with local residents and professionals on local identities of the Salzkammergut.

While these projects assemble individual artists, the following projects are designed and executed in collaboration with international institutions and other ECoC organisations:

In the Creative Europe project **Libertalia** we collaborated with different cultural operators such as Historieverket (Sweden) and SAFE REGENERATION (United Kingdom), cities such as Turku (Finland), Limerick (Ireland) and Magdeburg (Germany) as well as other ECoCs such as Veszprém 2023 (Hungary).

Other examples for EU-funded projects already mentioned are **The Big Green** and **DECONFINING** (with more than 20 partners on the European and African continent). In the framework of **Volugram**, we've teamed up with Tartu 2024, Bodø2024 and multiple educational institutions for an Erasmus+ project to promote the development of volunteering as part of an individual learning pathway, to rethink volunteering and discuss future volunteering strategies of ECoCs.

Salzkammerqueer is building sustainable networks with Chemnitz 2025 and České Budějovice 2028.

The connection between cycling, cultural and societal topics is transforming the **European Peace Ride** into an unprecedented event. Together with Chemnitz 2025, the project will start in Bad Ischl in 2024. The cyclists connect former and future ECoCs Linz 2009, České Budějovice 2028, Plzen 2015 and Chemnitz 2025. By this, they act as a symbol for European unity and peace.

While **SCALA** also works with a high number of international artists and craftspeople, they also cooperate with institutions in order to strengthen and widen their international network. This includes the Open Design School of Matera 2019 (Italy), the Penland School of Craft (United States of America) or the Munich Master School for Craft (Germany).

mitos 21, the European theatre network, will be part of the **European Theatre Festival Bad Ischl**, which brings representatives of numerous well-known international theatres to Bad Ischl.

International Networking

One of the most important characteristics and advantages of being a European Capital of Culture is the constantly growing network between a variety of European cities and the intensive collaboration and exchange between former, present and future ECoCs. Being part of the ECoC Family has always been a valuable asset for Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024.

Beside the ongoing collaborations with multiple different ECoCs (such as Novi Sad 2022, Timișoara 2023, Veszprém 2023, Chemnitz 2025 or Trenčín 2026), we have been intensively collaborating with Bodø2024 and Tartu 2024 in the past few years. Inside the informally called ECoC-Trio, everybody can draw on each other's experiences and imaginativeness.

The three ECoCs of 2024 are organising a joint Family Meeting which will be happening from 19-23 September, 2023 in Tartu. Furthermore, a joint programme presentation will be held in Brussels on 15 November, 2023. Both events will be enriched by artistic performances with (amongst others) artists from Austria, Estonia and Norway uniting the three countries once more.

Examples of collaborations with Bodø2024 are the projects **DECONFINING**, **Letters to Ruth** or the project **Village Party** (programmed by Bodø2024) which has been inspired by the projects **Folk Fest** and **Bygdefest** and is uniting Austrian, Estonian and Norwegian artists. We are also collaborating with Tartu 2024 in the framework of projects like **Volugram**, **Kissing Tartu** or **Salzkammerqueer**.

Furthermore, in the framework of the project **Hidden World Expanding** (programmed by Tartu 2024), the Art Workshop (Kunstwerkstatt) of the Lebenshilfe Gmunden is sending artworks to Estonia to exhibit them at Kondas Centre.



Green: Böhler & Orendt. Give Us, Dear © Christian Orendt

It is also envisioned to have Austrian, Estonian and Norwegian artists be a part of the respective openings of the ECoCs of 2024. This, as well as the participation of further Estonian and Norwegian artists in our programme, shows the fruitful exchange of artistic perspectives between different ECoCs.

As there is an abundance of international artists and cultural professionals involved in the programme, there has also been a lively exchange with international and cultural institutions, theatre networks, with many universities and embassies representing their countries in Austria. In January 2023, a delegation of cultural attachés and ambassadors visited Bad Ischl and Bad Goisern to hear and learn about the programme and capacity building for 2024 and beyond and to get to know the region of the European Capital of Culture. We receive support from multiple cultural institutions and embassies and are honoured to collaborate with a variety of these international stakeholders in the framework of our artistic programme.



CAPACITY TO DELIVER

The political support we received from very early on has not receded. As already mentioned in previous reports, political and financial support was secured contractually very soon after the title was announced. Contracts were signed by 2019 (Bad Ischl) and June 2021 (Federal State of Austria, Federal States of Upper Austria and Styria, 22 municipalities and tourism associations). We are still having regular meetings with representatives of all 23 municipalities and are furthermore receiving strong support from the part of embassies and cultural institutes as well as from political representatives on all levels.

Political and Financial support

Our largest funding sources, the State of Austria, the Federal State of Upper Austria and the Federal State of Styria, responded to increasing inflation by providing additional funding of EUR 1.6 million. This demonstrated their clear and ongoing commitment to supporting Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024. In addition, all leading politicians from the Federal Government, the Federal States and the municipalities repeatedly attended our press conferences and made positive statements in favour of our project. Both, political representatives and regional cultural stakeholders, keep promoting Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 at various public events and refer to the title year 2024 in their speeches.

Infrastructure Development

Since the elaboration of our Bidbook, it has been part of our long-term strategy to advocate for the development and implementation of sustainable regional infrastructure projects (such as the revitalisation of existing vacant spaces) to our various municipalities. As we do not have a direct influence on the advancement of those projects which are placed under the responsibility of the municipalities and private owners, we can only strongly advocate the importance of a well-developed infrastructure for the success and longevity of cultural initiatives.

Some projects are not developing as quickly as we would expect them to. We tried to accelerate the process by prioritising suitable spaces and communicating those to our funding bodies, now the onus lies on them to implement the proposed projects. Alas, not all of them will be finished in 2024 (see below). Nevertheless, in the long-term, after their

completion, they will contribute greatly to the lasting cultural enhancement of the region. Furthermore, a number of sites can already be used for performances, installations and other cultural interventions and our programme delivery will not be compromised by the works in progress rather than completion.

This is the current state of the main infrastructure projects we initiated:

Open Culture Center Bad Ischl (OCC)

As mentioned in our last Monitoring Report, we found a new location for the planned cultural centre we proposed to establish in Bad Ischl. In cooperation with Saline AG and on the initiative of the Mayoress of Bad Ischl, this cultural centre will be established at the old Kolowrat Sudhaus. This project is advancing well, regular planning meetings are held with the owner of the building. It is planned to move the town library into the building, to create a youth centre and artists' studios, other areas of the space are not clearly dedicated yet. To decide on this, a workshop around the topic "What do we expect from an open cultural centre?" will be held in September 2023. In 2024, the main exhibition **Sudhaus** will be exhibited in the space which clearly shows that Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 has set a powerful first impetus.

Refurbishment of Lehar Theater

The Lehar Theater has just been bought by the municipality of Bad Ischl. The municipal council is currently discussing a renovation concept that was evaluated together with the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments. In the long term, the Lehar Theater will be a place for art of all kinds and an open cultural centre. We can already use parts of it in 2024.

Lehar Villa Bad Ischl

The renovation of the Lehar Villa is being carried out at the city's behest in close coordination with the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments and will be open to numerous visitors in 2024 in a renovated appearance.

Bad Ischl City Museum

The Bad Ischl City Museum will be revitalised by means of the new concept called "Hotel Austria" (the original name of the house) and will open in May 2024. Accompanied by two experienced museum researchers and curators, the narrative of the museum will be historically expanded and differentiated.

Refurbishment of Stadttheater Gmunden (City Theater)

The renovation of Stadttheater Gmunden (City Theater) still is a top priority for the City of Gmunden and is strongly necessary and important for the entire region as a theatre and event venue. The renovations will begin in September 2023. The renovation will be completed in the course of 2024.

Gmunden Art Quarter

The development of a derelict inner-city industrial site, the KunstQuartier (Art Quarter), is still a priority. For this, a design study as well as concepts for its implementation, utilisation

and financing are currently being developed. The KunstQuartier offers a multitude of possibilities: exhibition spaces, workshop possibilities, event and recreation spaces, available for the title year of 2024. All necessary preparations for the renovation of the villa located in this area (to hold residences, workshops and set up studios there) have been started. The renovation and adaptation will take place in autumn 2023. Photo exhibitions (such as **Gmunden Photo**) have already taken place in the available area, being accessible in modular containers.

Furthermore, we have initiated the new adaptation of the Alt-ausee Literature Museum. The museum itself receives funds from the EU-LEADER programme for this refurbishment which has already started and is planned to be completed by February 2024.

We also thought it would be useful to explain how we are making progress on related areas of the transport and tourism infrastructure and operations.

Mobility (Public Transport)

Some key points in our Smart Mobility measurement plan are the year-round extension of the operational hours on the main public transport connections until late evening including weekends, the implementation of a region-wide micro-public transport for the "last mile" and the creation of an attractive tariff product (ticketing). Here is a summary:

1. In December 2022, ÖBB added further main connections in the evening hours on the Salzkammergut railway line and a direct intercity connection from/to Vienna was reinstated. Further extensions until the late evening are planned for the timetable of 2024, starting from December 2023.
2. Based on our measurement plan for sustainable mobility, the municipalities and tourism associations of the region have continued to work on a region-wide model for the last mile (micro-public transport) in the Salzkammergut. In Ausseerland, the southern part of the Salzkammergut, this service started on 11 July, 2023 already. Other municipalities and regions will follow during the following couple of months, so that by the beginning of 2024, the region-wide model "Salzkammergut Shuttle" with operating hours until 10 pm will be available. For visitors to the ECoC programme this means that the so-called **Culture Taxi**, having been requested for a long time, will be available.
3. To be able to offer mobility incentives for day visitors and overnight guests in addition to the cultural programme, a new and attractive Salzkammergut public transport ticket will be issued in 2024, which will also entitle its holder to reduced admission to the exhibitions of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024. True to the motto "towards culture by public transport".

Cultural Tourism

As we have described in **Sharing Salzkammergut – The Art of Travelling**, supporting a more sustainable model of cultural tourism is still a central part of our cultural vision. In collaboration with regional tourism authorities, we defined the following joint strategy as "Our common path to 2024":

1. Tourism products will be developed alongside the programme line "Sharing Salzkammergut – the Art of Travelling" which includes defining travel occasions based on the completed programme of 2024.
2. A common "Salzkammergut Welcome Strategy" – connected to our volunteer programme – involving the whole hospitality sector is being established, key next steps will be taken in October 2023.
3. Communication and Marketing will be harmonised (see Communications Strategy in E – Management).
4. Digitisation measures with a focus on the digital visitor journey are being developed (see the description of our Apps in Management).

Overall we do believe that we and our partners have worked in a joined-up way establish a sustainable model of cultural tourism, using our natural resources for very special events and experiences, improving public transport and delivering the possibility of more sustainable tourism and a lasting cultural infrastructure. More detail on how our broader communications strategy and our plans for sustainable tourism intersect is shown in the Management chapter.



Sharing Salzkammergut – the Art of Travelling © European Capital of Culture Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024

D

OUTREACH

In developing our programme, we have always attached a high importance to involving local artists and cultural organisations. The majority of our projects are implemented by regional initiatives and connect cultural stakeholders in the region and internationally. This characteristic of a bottom-up approach and its success was also proven by the fact that our Open Call for projects resulted in over 1.000 submissions, most of them being sent in from regional individuals, initiatives and institutions. Thus, we are already reaching different population groups by engaging a variety of project holders.

Our admission policy is guaranteeing a low threshold to the programme of 2024: About 75% of our events are admission free (including big events like the **Opening, Folk Fest** or our AIR programme **Salt Lake Cities**) which allows a wide audience to participate. This policy is also intending to attract new population groups who otherwise might not have been able to attend similar cultural events.

Even though all projects and events of our programme are intended to be open and accessible to everyone, it is indispensable to reach a diversified audience by defining certain target groups (such as young people, persons with disabilities or the elderly). This helps us to allow for more social inclusion and be sensitive about specific needs.

Youth Programme and Schools

Next Generation You is the name and heart of our youth programme. Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 recognizes young people as our next event managers, politicians and creators of the region – an important resource for the Salzkammergut region. This is why the region has an obligation to provide new incentives, perspectives and opportunities for young people. To prevent brain-drain and to shape the future of the region, young people need spaces and laboratories to experiment. **Next Generation You** offers them a platform to realise their own ideas: they are invited to think about their future, to develop different projects and thus to express their own thoughts and ideas – while independently managing their budgets.

In this process, the following questions are central: How do young people want to live and work? What do they think about politics, education and culture? What are their concerns and needs? To answer those questions, youth forums will be held

in a variety of sub-regions. Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 will support and accompany the participants of the project in the realisation of their ideas. The goal of **Next Generation You** is the establishment of a long-lasting network which goes beyond the individual projects. We expect approximately 100 small scale youth projects and are aiming to present all projects and ideas at the end of 2024.

The **Holy Hydra – Next Generation You** Festival Lab is included in the projects **Church Sound Space** and the **New Salt Festival**. Through active involvement in the processes, it allows young people to immerse themselves in the practical world of events from very early on – programming formats like contemporary dance and performances, electronic music and new media art. The festival lab will begin with a retreat in autumn 2023. Over the course of regular fixed meetings, process evaluations and with the support of a team of experts, the main event of 2024 will be planned and realised. Students from the Handelsakademie Gmunden with a focus on event and media management will develop concepts for the festival within the scope of their studies.

Holy Hydra is only one of many projects proving that schools and educational institutions are a central multiplier for art and culture in the region to enable knowledge transfer and the training of young event managers. This is why we are happy to have established strong partnerships with numerous regional educational institutions in the framework of several projects. Some are described hereafter:

The pilot project **SKUL**, with weekly art and culture lessons in participating educational institutions and a platform for exchange between educators has already been launched in the Ausseerland. In 2024, the pilot phase will take place in 4 municipalities, but the aim of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is the future continuation of the project in all 23 municipalities so that art and culture can become a regular subject in schools. Thus, **SKUL** could become a model for Austria and other European regions.

The project **Hands ON! Salzkammergut** invites young people to try their hand at arts and crafts. In this way, they are able to develop their own interests and an understanding of traditional crafts.

Da kloane Prinz – Reloaded is a pilot project for child-oriented cultural education for children aged 6 and older. It is implemented from 2022-2024 at the Concordia Elementary School, Bad Ischl, in close cooperation with regional music schools and vocational high schools in the Salzkammergut region. In the classroom, in courses, workshops, in the recording studio and on stage, the project supports children in the negotiation of their identities – locally or globally.

Artists in residences participating in the programme **SCALA** can choose between different formats of knowledge transfer. Many of them have decided to work with schools, resulting in different material workshops with students aged from 6 to 15.

Some diploma theses will be realised within the framework of projects, like for example, in the project **Girls' and Women's Football** (working title), in **Holy Hydra** or **Next Generation You**. At the Bad Ischl Commercial Academy, opportunities for participation are still being developed in Autumn 2023.

In the Associated Project **For the world I want to live in**, a joint project with Energie AG and Stern Holding GmbH for Salzkammergut 2024, students of polytechnic schools and artists are sketching ideas of a world worth living in.



New Salt Festival: Rojin Sharafi © David Višnjič

Careers in Culture

We have also curated multiple projects designed to encourage young people to follow creative and cultural careers in our region, as for example:

- **Tavern Lab** shows possibilities and visions of the tavern of tomorrow as a place of encounters, events and culinary arts. The aim of this project is to work out practical proposals in collaboration with recognised chefs and young people.
- Projects like **SCALA** and **City of Ceramics** focus on crafts, creative industries, their connection to design as well as their professionalisation and internationalisation (cooperations with universities are initiated as a key step to attract young people to the region).
- Cultural life is stimulated by making the Lehar Theater in Bad Ischl playable (e.g. by means of the **European Theatre Festival Bad Ischl**, by motivating the local scene and proposing possibilities of international networking). The creation of a cultural centre in the vacant Sudhaus in Bad Ischl, a cultural area in Gmunden in the former city garden, the transformation of a shut down quarry at lake Traunsee into a cultural zone and many more engage locals to participate in cultural activities in the region and has the potential to generate jobs in the cultural sector.

Volunteers

Since 2022, we have been part of the EU-project **Volugram**, funded by Erasmus+. In this project, we rethink the concept of Volunteering by bringing together learning communities and education systems: partners in the project are the three ECoCs of 2024 – Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024, Tartu 2024 and Bodø2024 – as well as VOCO Tartu Vocational College, IKS VAEV Research, Development Agency GmbH (Austria) and Studentorganisasjonen Nord (Norway).

In September 2023, the European Capital of Culture Volunteer Campaign will launch. A full-time employee will be in charge of sourcing and motivating people in the last 4 months before the start of our title year. Our approach is not to invent a new volunteer programme, but to build a network by drawing on already existing regional associations (like 4yougend, SUPPORT4youth.eu or ULF – Independent State Center for Voluntary Work) and volunteer programmes (e.g. in the framework of **Culturebuddies**). Volunteering in the region will be supported through collaborations with the already mentioned regional associations and also in the framework of our programme **Next Generation You**. All these structures will participate in disseminating calls for proposals and information about our volunteer programme. By being part of the EU project **Volugram**, we are inserting the Salzkammergut region into a larger European network.

We are also planning an additional volunteer exchange with Tartu for young people from Salzkammergut. An offer for international volunteers to travel to Salzkammergut and Upper Austria is currently being discussed with the cooperation partners.

Increasing accessibility

In cooperation with the Regional Caritas and Church of Bad Ischl the project **Culturebuddies** was brought to Salzkammergut. Culturebuddies are volunteers who help overcome hurdles when visiting an event in the field of arts and culture with individuals or small groups. They act as bridges into cultural life, thereby making a social contribution, helping, explaining the circumstances or simply by being there. The project will begin with a conceptualisation and activation phase in 2023. In 2024, the programme will be reinforced in order to be able to exist independently and sustainably from 2025 onwards.

Additionally, we would like to highlight a few projects in our programme that especially focus on the inclusion of people with different abilities.

A part of the project **Wet Sounds** will take place in the Herz-Reha hydrotherapy pool, where children from the kindergarten for children with disabilities will participate. Floatation will be facilitated by Watsu practitioners, surreal music by Joel Cahen will invite listeners on a journey through their imagination.

In the inclusive dance project **Lake**, young people and children with different abilities are working on a production about the resource water together with professional artists from Salzkammergut, Greece and France.

Hidden World Expanding is an Art Brut / Outsider Art cooperation project between the Art Workshop (Kunstwerkstatt) of the Lebenshilfe Gmunden and the Kondas Centre as part of the Tartu 2024 programme. Works of Gmunden-based artists are shown at Kondas Centre in Estonia in autumn of 2023. Unfortunately, a planned exhibition project of the Art Workshop in Gmunden, presenting international positions, was cancelled due to major staff problems.

Integration of people with a migratory background

We are in active exchange with ReKi, the Regional Competence Centre for Integration and Diversity. For example, through this valuable network we got to know some of the protagonists for our film project **Behind the Scenes**. There, essential workers or tourism professionals are made visible, most of whom come from other countries and have migrated to the Salzkammergut. Furthermore, we are realising the Associated Project **The Female Headgear** (exhibition) with ReKi. Besides that, the coordinators of ReKi constantly give us important feedback on how we can shape our communication to be as accessible as possible and target specific groups with different language skills.

Involvement of the elderly

Our programme is curated with the intention to address old and young people similarly. While a lot of topics are relevant to all age groups, there are also projects addressing elderly people more directly. The special exhibition **My Wardrobes – Female Joie de Vivre Up Until Old Age** is dedicated to the biographies of 25 women between the ages of 63 and 103 along various living environments. In **Ähnroas – Old:New:Fashioned**, portraits of “mature supermodels” in extraordinary outfits all over the Salzkammergut region will be made – from the modern, hip and wild all the way to the traditional, old-timey, classical, from “grand dames et messieurs” all the way to simple Sunday fashion. The portraits will be displayed in exhibitions in elderly care facilities. By this, we try to open up those facilities so they can be experienced as places of art and encounters.

We have also added the project **Alzheimer’s Holiday** by MAS Alzheimerhilfe (Alzheimer’s Aid) in Bad Ischl to our programme as an Associated Project. At MAS Alzheimerhilfe, people affected by Alzheimer and their relatives can spend their holidays together and participate in various activities. Openly accessible events, but specifically addressed to people participating in this project, are planned in the **Garden of the Healing Powers**, focusing on herbal knowledge and garden art.



Holy Hydra © Fabian Erblehner

Sport and Movement as new aspects of art and community building

Sport and movement are tools for community building and Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 defines movement as a new kind of art form. We are working together with the platform “Salzkammergut bewegt”, uniting around 20 running and cycling events. Their aim is to support the participating initiatives in further expanding their international networks while supporting and enforcing already existing local structures. Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is assisting the platform with publicity and thus combining sport and movement with art and culture. As this area is quite male dominated in the Salzkammergut region, **Girls’ and Women’s Football** (working title) offers the opportunity to reflect on this and supports the expression of female perspectives. The **European Peace Ride**, realised in collaboration with Chemnitz 2025 and fit4bike will start in Bad Ischl in 2024 including an inclusive bike culture event as a symbol for diversity, peace and Bicycle Culture.

E

MANAGEMENT

Legal structure

Since the last Monitoring, no fundamental changes have been made to the organisation of our ECoC delivery body, with one exception. As of April 2023, the Kulturhauptstadt Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut 2024 GmbH has amended its articles of association and thereby obtained a non-profit status under tax law. This brings about the advantage of a reduced VAT rate (this means inter alia that the ECoC can profit from a larger net total from the investment made by our main sponsor) and guarantees income tax deductibility for donations in the title year. Furthermore, corporate income tax will not apply from 1 January, 2024 and there are tax advantages regarding the advertising levy.

There have been no changes in the structure and working of the Board. There were no changes in the owners of our GmbH (shareholders) and only one change of personnel in the supervisory board (the Bad Ischl Tourist Association delegated a new person). Supervisory Board meetings are held 4 times a year and the shareholders’ meeting (General

Assembly) once a year. Above all, the chairman of the Supervisory Board, Hannes Heide, is in regular contact with the two CEOs (Managing Director and Artistic Director) of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 and is therefore constantly informed about current operational issues.

In addition, the Sponsoring Committee (as part of the Supervisory Board) continues to support our GmbH in its search for sponsors. Our Regional Forum meets at least once a year and supports our GmbH in communicating externally with the region and in bringing concerns, requests and other regional matters to us. We are closely and positively cooperating with our sponsors and funding bodies.

Mayors’ meetings are held regularly at the municipal level, as well as with the tourism associations. Our largest funding bodies, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport (BMKOES), the Federal State of Upper Austria and the Federal State of Styria, regularly monitor the ECoC activities through the Controlling Advisory Board and maintain a regular and close exchange with the two Directors and the team. Any projects of the ECoC are decided in this body, thus confirming their economic efficiency, legality and usefulness.

Any interference in the artistic field is explicitly forbidden and excluded by the Rules of Procedure of the Controlling Advisory Board and according to our funding agreements with the Federal and State Governments. The European Capital of Culture is supported by the public administration both at the municipal level (in preparing and implementing events) and at State and Federal State level (in networking and specialist questions).



Billboard advertising in the region © Sigi Strasser

Staffing

One of the characteristics of European Capitals of Culture is the ever-changing size of their teams. Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is no exception: We started with a team of around 6 people which, since winning the title, we've built up according to the needs of the company. As of September 2023, we have a team of 29,5 members (+1 PE in-kind services). In addition to our permanent employees, there are, as of September 2023, 5 external production managers and 4 curators working for Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024, in charge of in-house productions that can not be managed by the full-time team due to limited resources.

Full-time team

Although there was some early turbulence in the appointment and then departure of the first Artistic Director, since then the staffing of the core team has been stable and positive under the Direction of our CEOs. More recently Stefan Heinisch, who has been part of this project since the very beginning, has stepped into the Communication and Marke-

ting Director role from his previous role. We have also tried very hard to create a positive legacy, especially in terms of young people. So, as we already mentioned, 4 team members are currently on maternity leave. The resulting temporary vacancies were either filled by replacements or the tasks were taken over by other team members.

Overall, in the course of departures and replacements in the areas of marketing and finance, as already mentioned, we have found that the search for qualified personnel willing to settle in the region combined with high rents for housing and the temporary employment possible only for the duration of the project is not easy. This has meant that our team has needed to cope with a considerable additional workload due to constant staff additions and departures.

After the completion of the title year 2024, 11 people will remain employed until the end of March 2025 and 3 people until the end of June 2025. Afterwards, the liquidation of the GmbH will take place and the agendas will be handed over to the banner city Bad Ischl as its legal successor.



Team of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 © Sophie Köchert

Current financial projections

Our financial projections have not changed significantly since the establishment of our Bidbook. As already mentioned, the State of Austria and the Federal States of Upper Austria and Styria have augmented their funding, conducting an inflation adjustment. We have attained the goal we've set ourselves in terms of mobilising sponsors and are also in contact with international embassies and cultural institutes to receive additional support for selected projects.

The outlier in the table below concerns the EU funding we expected to receive when applying to become an ECoC. Even

though we are very happy to manage a variety of EU funded projects such as **Deconfining**, **The Big Green** or **Libertalia**, a lot of our submitted projects were declined. Furthermore, regional project holders often did not have the necessary capacities to apply for supplementary EU funds. Thus, there is a difference of more than EUR 2,5 million between the financial projections we listed in our Bidbook and the current situation of secured funding.

Still, with combined efforts of our team, we have managed to budget wisely and could curate a strong programme, even in times of inflation and while responding to the demands of 23 different municipal stakeholders.

Our current financial projections (as of July 2023) are set out in the table below (net values excluding VAT – we expect the official authorisation for input tax deduction in autumn 2023).

Income to cover operating expenditures	Bidbook		Current situation of secured funding	
	In millions €	in %	In millions €	in %
Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut	4,5	15	4,36	14,91
National Government	10	33,33	10,87	37,21
Federal States (Upper Austria and Styria)	10	33,33	10,87	37,21
EU (with exception of Melina Mercouri Prize)	3	10	0,32*	1,08
Private (Sponsoring, Merchandising)	1	3,33	1,30**	4,45
Melina Mercouri Prize	1,5	5	1,50	5,14
	30	100	29,20	100

* part of the programme budget
 ** excluding in-kind benefits (about 500.000,00 €)

Operating expenditures	Programme		Promotion		Administration		Other		Total	
	in m. €	in %	in m. €	in %	in m. €	in %	in m. €	in %	in m. €	in %
Bidbook	21	70	4	13,3	5	16,7	/	/	30	100
Current projection	14,61*	50,6	3,26	11,3	10,35	35,8	0,66	2,3	28,88	100

* exit value (including income from Ticketing, EU project funding and other project-participations)

Use of European Union funding, including ERDF and ESF

Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is implementing a variety of projects with international partners that are co-financed by the European Union. The majority of projects co-financed by EU funds are supported by Creative Europe, some by EFRE and Erasmus+.

While the fixed EU funded projects are described in Chapter B please find here an overview of their finances (as of September 2023):

EU funded projects

Project name <i>Fund</i>	Project period	Total project budget	EU Fund for Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024	Match by Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024	Sum EU Fund + Match for Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024	Status
Libertalia <i>(Creative Europe)</i>	2020 – 23	325.000,00 €	18.000,00 €	25.000,00 €	43.000,00 €	fixed
Deconfining <i>(Creative Europe)</i>	2022 – 26	3.028.070,00 €	183.141,00 €	154.593,50 €	337.734,50 €	fixed
Volugram <i>(Erasmus+)</i>	2022 – 24	250.000,00 €	51.954,00 €	0,00 €	51.954,00 €	fixed
The Big Green <i>(Creative Europe)</i>	2022 – 25	2.000.000,00 €	62.400,00 €	41.600,00 €	104.000,00 €	fixed
Lebenswerter Alpenraum <i>(EFRE)</i>	2022 – 25	1.010.303,00 €				fixed
CONNECT – Digital and Green Skills for sculpture (as part of SCALA) <i>(Erasmus+)</i>	2023 – 25	60.000,00 €	60.000,00 € *	<i>(EU Fund for CONNECT)</i>		fixed
Joyful Mobility <i>(FFG – Austrian Research Promotion Agency, DUT – Driving Urban Transitions Fonds)</i>	2024 – 26	1.468.290,70	1.171.933,60 € **	<i>(EU Fund for Joyful Mobility)</i>		fixed
Young Heritage <i>(Erasmus+)</i>	2023 – 25	250.000,00€				applied
European Capital of Culture Youth Network <i>(Erasmus+)</i>						rejected
From DNA to AI <i>(Creative Europe)</i>						rejected (twice)
Innovation Scool <i>(Erasmus+)</i>						rejected
PACT <i>(Horizon Europe)</i>						rejected
Nature-Based Solutions NBS <i>Commons (Horizon Europe)</i>						rejected
Sum (fixed projects)		8.141.663,70 €	315.495,00 €	221.193,50 €	536.688,50 €	

Funds from EU programmes, which are fixed until the end of June 2023, total some 315.495,00 €.

* In those projects, Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is an Associated Partner but not receiving these EU funds directly. Thus, those amounts are not included in the sum below.

In addition to the programmes in the table above, EU funding was received through the Creative Europe mobility programme “Culture Moves Europe”. During the first funding cycle (October 2022-May 2023 for Artists’ application and March-June 2023 for Host organisations’ application), one application was approved and a total financial support of 1.850,00 € was achieved. As the project and travel activities need to be accomplished within a year from the funding commitment, more projects will be handed in for co-financing in the next funding cycle, starting in fall 2023.

Most of the EU funded projects (as shown earlier) are in-house productions. Exceptions are **Liveable Alpine Region 4.0**, which deals with sustainable tourism models, **Joyful Mobility**, a project exploring alternative ways of mobility, and **CONNECT – Digital and Green Skills for sculpture**, which was born as a legacy project of **SCALA**, aiming at pursuing the international exchange on contemporary art and craft after 2024. In summary, as already stated above and in our previous reports, it is

COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

23 for 24 – 23 municipalities become 1

In uniting 23 very different municipalities, we see it as a great success that none of them has dropped out of the project... so far! It was already becoming clear in the last stretch of the bidding phase that it was not only a matter of getting municipalities excited about the ECoC project and securing financial contributions, but also of holding this network together, strengthening and stabilising it during the preparation years. Hence our motto 23 for 24, because in addition to the banner city of Bad Ischl, 22 other municipalities in the Salzkammergut region are also making possible the European Capital of Culture 2024.

We did our very first communication tour in April and May 2021, during which we had already visited every municipality to inform them about the development of our programme, to promote our Open Call and motivate the cultural sector of the region to engage with it and participate (see also 2nd Monitoring Report). Within the framework of these meetings, the main focus was to distribute information between municipalities and the team of Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024. In this way we were able to keep the municipalities, our important regional partners, informed about the progress of the programme development and to promote the idea of regional cooperation.

As our programme was becoming more defined and concrete formats in participating municipalities were developed, we started, as already mentioned, another communication tour

a challenge for most regional initiatives to apply for and carry out EU funded projects. Many of the stakeholders are cultural associations or institutions, run by small teams, often on a voluntary basis. Thus, programmes such as “Culture Moves Europe”, which is easily accessible, offer a good opportunity to participate in European exchange programmes.

In addition, we continue to offer info sessions on EU programmes for the regional cultural scene, including one explicitly on the “Culture Moves Europe” Fund, which was very well attended. Consequently, inspired by these information sessions, multiple regional artists and cultural professionals responded to the call for individual mobility of artists and cultural professionals and applied for funding. So far, only one artist has received a positive answer to their applications and can pursue future projects with the aid of EU funds (totalling 1.850,00 €), thus further deepening their international networks. We hope that in the future more artists will receive EU funding to ensure a post ECoC legacy.

from March to July 2023, visiting all 23 municipalities. Within the framework of these information events (individual press conferences or merging of several municipalities into one programme presentation, e.g. Almtal), which were aimed at the local population, at associations (Vereine), the (tourism) industry and institutions of all kinds, we were able to engage in numerous personal discussions, strengthening local networks and establishing new contacts.

Our main press conferences took place in June 2022 in Bad Ischl, in November 2022 in Vorchdorf, the most recent ones in June 2023 in Graz and Vienna. We organised press conferences in Upper Austria, Styria and Vienna. By extending our communication tour to multiple Federal States, we wanted to reflect the regional aspect of our programme also on the geographical level. In November 2023, together with Bodø2024 and Tartu 2024, we will host a joint programme presentation of the ECoCs of 2024 in front of our joint network in Brussels.

Alongside these press events, we have been working on creating concise press materials in recent weeks and are consistently expanding our pool of visual materials. Since 2022, our strategy has been built around structuring the extensive programme in a coherent manner for the press and public. This involves striking a balanced approach between cultural policy messages and specific projects, without getting too lost in details.

Of course in all aspects of communication, we have emphasised the association of our project to the European Union

in all our publications as well as in the framework of press conferences and programme presentations. The EU logo marking Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 as a European Capital of Culture is placed on all our communication materials – in print and online (website, posters, programme booklets and other means of communication). Our project holders as well as the organisers of our Associated Projects also communicate that the ECoC is an action of the European Union. We attach a high importance on mentioning the complete title Kulturhauptstadt Europas/European Capital of Culture in our official wording and also demand this in the communication guidelines for our project holders.

Cooperation with Tourism Partners

As already announced in the 2nd monitoring report, we had our international PR & communication kick-off in March 2023 at ITB Berlin, the world's largest tourism trade fair. In close coordination with our tourism partners at regional and federal state level as well as tourism companies and incomers, we were already able to present more than 20 projects and travel events of our programme at this time. Accompanying press releases, especially to the relevant trade media, rounded off the presentation in Berlin.

In May 2023, we were again able to focus on Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 with activities in the context of the Austrian Travel Business (ATB), Austria's most important tourism trade fair in Vienna, and in this context also accompanied a group of international tour operators on a post-convention tour through the Salzkammergut (focus on "People and Places of 2024").



23 for 24 © Edwin Husic

Poster and Opening Campaigns

The poster campaigns (outdoor advertisement) we had started in 2022 continued in 2023, with a special attention to being visible in the Salzkammergut in summer 2023, especially to attract visitors and travellers for the next year. With our partners (marketing and advertising agencies), we are currently working on The Big Opening Campaign, which will start in November 2023. In addition, further activation campaigns are planned for January, March and June 2024. Promotion packages are planned in collaboration with the larger national daily newspapers (including inserts) as well as in the radio and TV sector.

As of July 2023, the programme preview (brochure) was reissued in an expanded version (1st edition had been published for the ITB Berlin in March 2023). The new programme preview was distributed to all relevant regional partners (municipalities, tourism associations, hotel industry) at the beginning of Summer 2023.

Social Media Strategy

Since Winter 2022/23, we focussed our Social Media strategy on "Preparing Salzkammergut". The programme development and preparatory work is rapidly progressing and the first artists are completing residencies and research work in the region. Thus, our Social Media team is already producing and publishing related content in the form of short videos (reels), stories and photo albums. A focus lies on being active on Facebook and Instagram. YouTube is used as a platform for live streams of our press events. On LinkedIn, only selected

content has been published and shared so far. An editorial plan ensures that relevant content is published on multiple channels, especially our newsletter, which has been sent out weekly since spring 2023 and aims to build up a larger community that wants to be informed about programme focuses and events.

Current media and public reaction to the ECoC

The media's response to our press conferences was consistently positive, with approximately 90% of journalists referring to the presented content in their articles. In addition to our planned press events, we regularly receive proactive interview requests and engage in research discussions, resulting in comprehensive coverage. Many of these requests come in responding to our regular press releases.

The local population and the cultural and creative scene still have very high expectations towards us which can be challenging but also inspiring to always keep our standards high. To stay away from disputes of local politics, we work hard to redirect the focus of the media's reporting towards our programme development.

Art and Culture Committee as Ambassadors

To help us keep the public involved, we continue to receive strong support from our Art and Culture Committee. As already mentioned in our Second Monitoring Report, this Committee is composed of important personalities personally connected to the region out of the field of Art and Culture. Having joined our ECoC team at the invitation of our Artistic Director, they are serving as "Cultural Ambassadors" for Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 on a voluntary basis, spreading the philosophy of our programme.

Digital Strategy

In the last Monitoring Report we presented the project **On-Stage – The digital stage for Salzkammergut 2024**. We had the ambitious goal of establishing an independent digital platform on which art, culture, knowledge, the most diverse reference groups as well as the regions themselves can be networked with each other and for their own benefit. And with the best of intentions, we wanted to develop this not only for ourselves, but together with other European cultural regions and upcoming ECoCs.

In 2022, we were able to hold in-depth talks with regional partners and other ECoCs, such as Nova Gorica 2025 and Oulu 2026. In September 2022, we also involved Ars Electronica Solutions in Linz, as a strong partner to implement and further manage the project, also after 2024. Unfortunately, we were ultimately unable to create the necessary framework conditions for the implementation of On Stage, i.e. to guarantee the

necessary financial capital on the one hand and to ensure the involvement, co-design and co-financing of European partners such as cultural regions or ECoCs on the other.

However, together with Ars Electronica and its artistic director Gerfried Stocker, we were able to establish a programme-focused collaboration at the beginning of 2023, which we will continue and further intensify by being present and doing a programme presentation at the Ars Electronica Festival 2023 (Theme of this year's Festival is "Who owns the truth").

For the field of action digitisation and communication/marketing, we were able to fix the development of a Cultural Education app for Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 together with hublz GmbH. Analogue projects of our programme will be transferred to the digital world using methods of cultural mediation, thus creating special experiences for the users. This creates a "digital companion in space", regionally appropriate content pops up via geo-reference. By the means of experience-oriented, immersive storytelling, a chatbot, gamification and the interactive use of media enable the active participation of a wide variety of users.

The app **Cultural Education App Salzkammergut 2024 by hublz** is intended to inform, convey cultural education through playful elements and create interfaces to other applications and existing digital tourism experiences, such as the app "upperguide" (by Upper Austria Tourism) (e.g. events, hiking routes and mobility / public transport connections (timetable query) as well as information on the nearest stops and stations). A discovery page points to selected content-related projects such as digital event introductions, a museum tour, an interactive walk, etc. The map view allows those interested in culture to find out more, the events page filters out events according to the respective focus of interest or programme line. The launch of the app is planned for Q4/2023.

Even after 2024, the app **Salzkammergut 2024** will be available for citizens and guests of the region so it can be sustainably used in the long-term. Tourism associations of the Salzkammergut are already very interested in adopting this digital tool starting from 2025.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Risk	Effect & Probability	Comment
Programme		
Infrastructure completed after the beginning of the title year	Effect: low Probability: medium (depending on municipalities)	There are many formats in public space and vacant places that are available temporarily. Some infrastructure projects (managed by the municipalities), that will not be finished on time, will still be accessible for our artistic programme. Other bigger infrastructure projects will be finished on time.
Effects of the pandemic (restrictions, limited audience)	Effect: medium Probability: medium	During the COVID-19-pandemic, we gained valuable experience on how to organise cultural events during a pandemic. Above all, we tested more outdoor formats, reliable hygiene concepts and hybrid formats. We are in the position to react quickly to any new developments and/or restrictions.
Shortages of materials and delays in deliveries	Effect: high Probability: medium	In order to not be too dependent on global supply chains, we have established numerous cooperations with regional companies and are still negotiating with others. Especially materials such as wood are readily available in the region. In case of a shortage, other materials are used - if possible. Otherwise, projects will be scaled down.
Force Majeure	Effect: high Probability: medium	Weather events are becoming more and more extreme - also in the Salzkammergut. But production companies are already geared up for this, e.g. wind-proof stage elements are absolutely necessary in an alpine region. A severe snowfall at the opening could have a serious impact on mobility.
Capacity Building		
Limited staff resources for in-house productions	Effect: high Probability: medium	We are organising 36 in-house productions as no suitable partners could be found for those projects. This is a risk in terms of human resources and general additional costs (e.g. index). In-house productions burden the production department and the administration (accounting, personnel and contracts). For 23 of those projects, we have therefore decided to work with 5 external production managers and 4 curators (September 2023). To cover those costs, income through sponsorships had to be increased and budget shifts were made.
Participation and Publicity		
Lack of support by volunteering	Effect: high Probability: low	Our region is known for voluntary work, we have already been supported by local associations, e.g. for the production of events. Volugram is in its execution phase, a Volunteer Coordinator is working to involve as many Helping Hands as possible. Networks and close cooperations with expert institutions (4youngend, ULF) of Upper Austria are planned.
Negative publicity	Effect: medium Probability: medium	The big variety of the programme is making it unlikely that negative reporting will concern all areas. If criticism is communicated, we will meet it with respect and openness. Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 is also always emphasising the importance of constructive debating. Regular press conferences since 2021 in and outside the region have contributed to our work being perceived as very transparent and show our willingness to engage with the press.
Visitor management		
Congestion of the regional transport network due to additional visitors	Effect: high Probability: medium	We try to minimise the impact on the region by programming the majority of the events in the off-season. Large events like the opening are challenges due to the geographical narrowness of the region, but we counteract this by expanding public transport services in collaboration with transport service providers.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Risk	Effect & Probability	Comment
Politics, Government & Finance		
Loss of political and financial support	Effect: high Probability: low	All political representatives stand behind Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024 and support projects according to the possibilities of the respective municipal resources. All funding agreements are contractually secured and supported by a broad political consensus.
Budget cuts or financial liquidity problems	Effect: high Probability: low	The flow of funds is regulated through controlling and compared with the respective arrival of the staggered subsidies. A budget reserve has also been kept to cover any unforeseen expenses.
Transgression of project budgets due to inflation, unforeseen personnel costs or unforeseen project expenditures	Effect: high Probability: high	2023 started with a high inflation rate, which meant a high burden for our GmbH in terms of rents, energy costs, costs for external providers, personnel costs, etc. We took this as an opportunity to discuss the issue with our funding bodies BMKOES, the Federal State of Upper Austria and the Federal State of Styria and obtained an additional subsidy in the amount of EUR 1.6 million. We received a part of the necessary index adjustment from the funding bodies which were used for unavoidable additional costs (e.g. energy costs, rent, personnel costs, etc.) Unfortunately, the funds were not sufficient to increase project budgets. If we have to deal with extraordinarily high inflation again in 2024, we will have to talk to our funding bodies again or, if necessary, take cost-cutting measures.
Input tax deduction is not granted	Effect: high Probability: low	The confirmation of the Austrian tax office for granting our GmbH to deduct input tax is still pending. According to our tax advisor, our GmbH meets all the criteria for this. The official audit of the tax office is currently in progress in the form of a special VAT audit (we waited for the final audit date for 1.5 years). We expect the official decision from the tax authorities in autumn 2023.

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gut 2024

European Capital of Culture
Bad Ischl Salzkammergut

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