



CATÓLICA  
ESCOLA DAS ARTES

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PORTO

PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL CULTURAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE FOR *AVEIRO2027*'S  
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE BID

Internship Report presented to Universidade Católica Portuguesa  
For obtaining the master's degree in Creative Industries' Management

*João Tiago Azevedo*

Porto, July 2021





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Work developed under the orientation of

Bruno Costa

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## **Dedicatory**

*To my parents and João,  
my cultural infrastructure  
in any shape and format possible.*



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*Thank you all for the journey,  
may we embark in many others together.*

## Abstract

(EN) The year of 2020 has built a singular momentum for cultural management approaches in Portugal. At the same time the impact of measures to control *COVID-19* pandemics changed how cultural products and activities were planned worldwide, 11 Portuguese cities have undertaken a bidding process for 2027 *European Capital of Culture*. Although only one will be selected for the title, this meant an unprecedented distribution of cultural management teams working on the most diverse regions. Long term cultural strategic plans established a local commitment to territorial transformation through European based cultural priorities, instead of the traditional alternation between the two main cities' cultural circles. Besides that, the implementation of public participation and engagement through the bidding process and the cultural management working practises have been developed almost exclusively through digital interaction. This has faced new challenges and opportunities, given the lack of specific operative guidelines addressing how to do it.

Besides raising several questions to the distribution of cultural access, it also demanded thinking new formats and interaction with cultural infrastructure. In this fruitful playground for experimentation, innovative proposals from different contexts, teams and practises may raise the relevance of peripheral cultural approaches on digital integration.

On one side, this internship's report at *Opium*, a cultural management company with experience in European projects, puts in context, proposes and balances the request of a database mapping cultural infrastructure's offer and needs, as well as a programme for a physical and digital cultural infrastructure, both preparing for the *Aveiro2027* bid.

On the other side, based on the online remote working practise, the report also puts in context how cultural management has addressed digital integration into their practises, taking the internship's production as the example of a proposal. Then, and foremost, the report balances connections from the learning experience, summarise practical recommendations, and opens a debate on cultural management digital approaches and their relevance for future local development. A sequence of a series of operative questions describes the internship process served as a guide to describe a practical approach to digital integration in cultural management. The answers aren't only given by this experience, but hopefully by the ones who dare to put it into practise.

**Key Words:** Cultural Management, *European Capital of Culture* bid, Digital Integration

## *Resumo*

(PR) O ano de 2020 impulsionou uma conjuntura singular para a ação da gestão cultural em Portugal. Ao mesmo tempo que o impacto das medidas de controlo da pandemia de *COVID-19* mudaram como os produtos e atividades culturais era planeados a nível global, 11 cidades portuguesas integraram o processo de candidatura para *Capital Europeia da Cultura* em 2027. Embora apenas uma será selecionada para o título, registou-se uma distribuição sem precedentes de equipas de gestão cultural a trabalhar as mais diversas regiões. Planos estratégicos para a cultura a longo prazo estabeleceram compromissos locais para a transformação dos territórios orientados por prioridades culturais europeias, ao contrário da tradicional alternância entre os círculos culturais das duas cidades principais. Para além disso, a implementação da participação e envolvimento público durante o processo de candidatura e as práticas de gestão cultural foram desenvolvidas, quase exclusivamente, através de interação digital. Tal confrontou-se com novas oportunidades e desafios, sem orientações operativas e específicas de como o fazer ainda.

Para além de levantar uma série de questões sobre a distribuição de acesso cultural, também foi necessário pensar novos formatos e interações com infraestruturas culturais. Neste fértil campo de experimentação, propostas inovadoras, provenientes de diferentes contextos, equipas, e práticas, podem destacar a relevância de abordagens culturais mais periféricas na integração digital.

Por um lado, este relatório de estágio na *Opium*, uma consultora de gestão cultural experiente em projetos europeus, contextualiza, propõe e reflete a resposta a uma base de dados, mapeando as necessidades e oferta de infraestrutura cultural, e o programa de uma infraestrutura cultural física e digital, preparando a candidatura de *Aveiro2027*.

Por outro, a partir de uma experiência de trabalho remoto *online*, o relatório contextualiza também como a gestão cultural tem abordado a integração digital nas suas práticas, tomando a produção realizada durante o estágio como o exemplo de uma proposta. Para além disso, e principalmente, o relatório reflete sobre as articulações a partir desse processo de aprendizagem, sintetiza recomendações práticas e abre o debate nas abordagens digitais do trabalho em gestão cultural e a sua relevância para o futuro desenvolvimento local. A sequência de questões operativas descreve o processo de estágio. As respostas não serão unicamente dadas por esta experiência, mas, confiantemente, por aqueles que se aventurarem a pô-las em prática.

**Palavras-chave:** Gestão Cultural, Candidatura a *Capital Europeia da Cultura*, Integração Digital.

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## **Glossary**

- AIDA – Aveiro’s District Commerce and Industry Board*
- CCDRC – Centro Region’s Coordination Commission for Development*
- CCI – Cultural ad Creative Industries*
- CCS – Cultural ad Creative Sector*
- CIM- Inter Municipal Community*
- CIRA – Aveiro’s Inter Municipal Community*
- DGPC – Cultural Heritage General Office*
- DRCN – North Regional Office of Culture*
- DRCC – Centro Region Cultural Office*
- ECoC – European Capital of Culture*
- EFTA/EEA – European Economic Area / European Free Trade Association*
- EU – European Union*
- FAUP – Faculty of Architecture from Porto University*
- GEPAC – Cultural Strategy, Planning, and Evaluation Office*
- MCIM - Master in Cultural Industries Management*
- RBE – School Libraries’ Network*
- RNBP – Public Libraries’ National Network*
- SIPA – Architectonic Heritage Information System*
- UCLG – United Cities and Local Governments*
- UCP – Portuguese Catholic University*
- UIA – Urban Innovative Actions*
- UN – United Nations*
- UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*
- UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation*
- WIPO – World Intellectual Property Organisation*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

The motivation to undertake the *Master in Creative Industries Management (MCIM)* at *UCP School of Arts* in Porto came from a professional need to increase my knowledge in project management, and apply it to my professional practice in cultural mediation.

In 2020, during the first year of *MCIM*, the impact of the measures to control *COVID-19* pandemics have deeply compromised cultural activity (Travkina, *et al.*, 2020). Even though the cultural institutions I was working with in Porto dismissed their mediation activities during this period, I had never felt so much the need to invest in cultural mediation. For cultural institutions' message and purpose to come across, this was an opportunity to reset existing cultural mediation practises, and invest in innovative ways for people to interact with them through digital approaches (Azevedo, 2020).

Starting to research on the opportunities for cultural mediation under these new circumstances, I dedicated my availability and professional interest to apply the knowledge into a practical experience. The advent of an *European Capital of Culture (ECoC)* taking place in Portugal in 2027 got several cultural management teams starting a bidding process, an opportunity that currently only happens every 15 years (European Parliament, 2014). This time there was a big diversity of candidates throughout the country, which has distributed the connection with Europe and culture to more peripheral cities and local cultural management long-term and strategic investments.

After I coming across *Aveiro's Strategic Plans for Culture (2019)* (one of the first to be publically presented) and developed a cultural project for *Aveiro2027* bid program at *Project Management and Business Plan's* course, there was the opportunity to present it to Carlos Martins. The team director from both the strategic plan and *Aveiro2027* bid, demonstrated a shared interest and approach, opening the door to do an internship at *Opium*, his cultural management company, responsible for the implementation of *Aveiro's Strategic Plan for Culture* and the bidding process for *Aveiro2027* bid.

Taking in in consideration not only my professional experience in cultural mediation but also my architectural background (*FAUP*, 2014), I was consulted to develop a territorial transformation through a cultural interaction infrastructure: the database on Aveiro's cultural infrastructure offer and needs to subsequently propose a digital and physical cultural infrastructure. That would follow the strategic Plan's analysis and should prepare the answer for Aveiro's bid book on the how the "urban development and infrastructure programmes, cultural heritage restoration projects and new cultural premises is useful as background and context at pre-selection" (European Commission, 2017:26).

Considering the involvement in other cultural management projects at *Opium*, my goal was to develop a practical experience while getting integrated, and proposing and presenting cultural projects for long term strategy framed by European standards and cultural policies. From that, I intended to translate possible connections from taking part of an *ECoC* bidding plan process to other cultural management projects, register some practical recommendation for future professional experiences in cultural management, and opening a debate on future challenges for cultural management.

As the context of work, from September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 to March 19<sup>th</sup> 2021 (*Appendix A*) has transitioned the original internship's hybrid online and in presence practise to a full time online remote working practise, I considered it should also be framed and debated on the results of this experience. Besides presenting the context, proposal and balance produced during this internship, this report presents the undertaken online work experience as a cultural management practise proposal, previously putting it into context for then to balance the relevance of its practise approach.

## **2 STATE OF THE ART: *Opium's cultural management digital approach on Aveiro2027 ECoC bid***

### **2.1 Cultural Practise:**

#### ***Digital integration approach on cultural management and in Opium***

##### **2.1.1 Digital integration in cultural project management**

###### *What?*

Frequently referred as Arts Management<sup>1</sup>, Cultural Management<sup>2</sup> has a broader scope than the artistic fields, being transversally applied to all cultural and creative sectors (CCS). It is defined by the management of cultural resources, such as goods and services, with specific client purposes, through its own operative methodologies. These resources may be material or immaterial, such as financial, technologic, commercial, and regarding knowledge and talent (Divulgação Dinâmica, 2019), and often intersect subjects such as territory, heritage, artistic creation, cultural policy, social strategy and economic markets (Colombo, et al., 2016).

###### *Where?*

For the complexity of these specific subjects, Cultural Management has been established not only as an economic activity but also as a research and education field in several universities since the 1960's (Shafer, 2019); it gathers professional associations worldwide, responsible for several events, publications and learning experiences, such as the first *European Network on Cultural Management and Policy* (ENCATC, 2021), the *Association for Cultural Economic International* (ACEI, 2021) and the *Association of Arts Administration Educators* (AAAE, 2021). Then, several others have followed in different places, such as: *Fachverband Kulturmanagement* (2021) in German speaking countries, the *International Association of Cross-Cultural Competence and Management in Austria* (WU Vienna, 2021) and the *Robert Bosh Cultural Managers Network* (2021) in Germany; *Professionals de la Gestió Cultural in Catalonia* (APGCC, 2021); *The Culture and Creativity Association for Cultural Managers* (2021) for most east European countries; *The International Arts Management Network* (2021), with specific interest on non-western countries, *The Association of Cultural Managers* (ACM, 2021) from Russia, and the *American Cultural Resources Association* (ACRA, 2021).

In Portugal, the attempt of setting a professional association has been developed in 2001, but it hasn't come to existence as a national network, no longer gathering professional activity (APGC, 2016). National references on the area come mostly influenced by European and international networks and policies, as governmental organisations, such as *GEPAC* (2021) and cultural regional offices that mostly promote and manage cultural activities and goods.

###### *Why?*

Cultural management aims to promote the influence of cultural activities in economy

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<sup>1</sup> Anglo-Saxon countries frequently use this terminology, even though the meaning of culture depends in other variables, such as context, location, and the broadness of the theoretical concept itself.

<sup>2</sup> As most often referred in Latin countries.

(through work practises and profitable activities) and society (through the influence of institutions and public services). Its practise is based on promotion, influence, design and production of cultural projects (Divulgação Dinâmica, 2019).

#### *Who?*

The specific skills from cultural management professionals rely on the efficiency to define precise goals, constant improvement, and proactive teamwork cooperation; the ability to balance between resources and results, taking into account sustainability, creativity, flexibility and innovation to improve the services quality; criteria to organise a sequence of wise choices and decisions to add value to their projects, based on experience, knowledge, communication and recognition of talent; flexibility to change of context, dynamics, timetables, legislation, keeping updated to the most recent trends and emerging needs. (Candel *et al.*, 2011).

Cultural management teams are either autonomous consultants adjudicated for specific projects or consulting agencies, whose experience makes it possible to reach more diverse projects, enabling a more cross-sectorial approach.

In terms of stakeholders, these professionals integrate and collaborate with international networks and articulate from global to local organisations. Also they establish connections between and private sector.

The client may be an organisation, an event or a cultural infrastructure, whose purpose is to reach or increase an audience, consumers, or appeal to decision makers. In terms of realm, there can be both private organisations and governmental entities, highlighting the economic and political importance of cultural management.

#### *When?*

The restrictions to control the *COVID-19* pandemic in the beginning of 2020 had a major impact on global economy. Excluding the aviation sector, CCS has registered the biggest and most immediate break, with cancelled and postponed events, closing of venues, and restrictions to social gathering and mobility, reaching a loss of 31% of 2019's turnover in the whole of Europe (EY, 2021). In most situations the first solution was a rushed approach for access to digital contents. Nevertheless some forefront organisations have adjusted contractual obligations and take the chance for some training and skill development for their workforce. Cities like Amsterdam, London, San Francisco or New York have commissioned large scale analysis on the major impacts to strategically invest on CCS as an urgent priority (Travkina, *et al.*, 2020).

Despite some of the previously enounced consequences, medium and long term cultural projects and programming registered a global unrecorded understanding to give a certain leeway. That came as time to adapt the existing formats; as funding for research and development of new formats and technical support; as policies to support transitory employment measures and alternative activities. All these answers were aimed for the sector's development, counting on digital transformation as a common resource: "a new wave of the digitally-mediated experience economy" (Travkina, *et al.*, 2020:24)

Limiting access to on-site working spaces, online work has become a mandatory practice worldwide for most services that don't depend on physical presence. That has been the case for cultural management professionals working on projects for support programs, strategy planning and application processes. Other projects relying on event production that have been cancelled, postponed or funding constrained have found it more difficult and unsustainable to adapt this practice.

Cultural management practises started by developing an interpretation of context. That

makes 2020's sudden changes a new paradigm (UCLG, 2020), reinforcing the need for cultural management to develop, for example, contingency plans broader than just an answer to specific situations. For that reason, *COVID-19* pandemic situation should not be only considered as a barrier to overtake, but an alert for the need of more flexible and resilient ways to assure context adaptation of economic activities; and specifically for cultural ones, it has brought new reflexion and desires for its practise (Balta, 2020).

The CCS growth, very grounded on technological development, has experienced an accelerated demand on digital access and interaction, making the immaterial became tangible, and replacing what was previously taken for granted in physical support (Sgourev, 2020). Nevertheless, the main challenges in CCS have risen for mobility and social inclusion, through acceleration of behavioural changes and reinforcement of cultural companies with an established global reach (KEA, 2020:13).

It has set an opportunity to rethink other ways to collaborate remotely, optimize time and resources, but also to find and identify the institution challenges and the required improvements for digital integration and strategic development (Colombo *et al.*, 2020).

It has allowed cultural managers to clear communication priorities and styles, and materialise them into digital tools, platforms and programs; it has also focused on measuring and characterising the public interaction and their interests, defining what works online, and in analogical and face-to-face interaction.

#### *How?*

In particular, the imposition of digital integration and online working practises through all businesses and public services has increased the urgent and transversal need for innovation. To achieve it, the role of cultural management has been enhanced, not only by transforming business models and services, but also to support cultural and artistic activities. The sudden changes on some CCS value-chains, the need to apply for funding programs, participate in cooperation projects and work through digital platforms and networks, has concentrated a big responsibility on cultural management to match these needs with goals established by local and international guidelines for public policies.

With that awareness, The *Committee on Culture of the World Organisation of United Cities and Local Governments* (UCLG, 2021) presents some of the best practises developed in the last 15 years in the *Agenda21culture* selected by their innovation, participation, sustainability, efficiency, transversely and reproducibility. In their platform, these 100 international activities are organised by the 17 goals from *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from the United Nations* (2015), but also through 9 commitments for culture as a guideline for local cultural management: *Cultural rights; Heritage, diversity, and creativity; Culture and education; Culture and environment; Culture and economy; Culture, equality, and social inclusion; Culture, urban planning, and public space; Culture, information, and knowledge; and finally Governance of culture* (UCLG, 2015). Each case is presented through its context, cultural approach, goals, project implementation, impact and evaluation, and references. Even though culture doesn't have a dedicated *Sustainable Development Goal*, in 2020 it has been integrated as a transformative force to achieve it, with its own *2030 Agenda* (UNESCO, 2020).

In Portugal the subject of digital integration has been updated in 2020 through the presentation of an action *Plan for Digital Transition* (Portugal Digital, 2020) addressed to three pillars - people, business and governance. Cultural management practises and policies have this year a particular international scrutiny as Portugal not only hosts the presidency for *The Council of European Union* during the first semester of 2021, but also, aside to Latvia, will be submitting their applications for the title of 2027 *ECoC* (GEPAC, 2020).

### 2.1.2 Digital integration in *Opium*

Leading several projects in Portugal, *Opium*, the hosting entity for this internship report, is a cultural project management and consultancy agency. To put the company's present business activity into context, the information gathered is based on the interview to its CEO, Carlos Martins, member of the *National Council for Culture (Arts Section)*, chairman of the *Agency for the Development of Creative Industries in the North of Portugal*, and prior executive director of *Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture (Appendix B)*.

#### *What?*

*Opium* has dedicated its practise to design and manage cultural education and training events; public policy research and advice; creative projects' planning and funding; heritage and cultural tourism promotion and enhancement (*Opium*, n.d.).

Since its origin, most of its projects came from public realm, in local and regional scale. The projects with private sector, most often, aim to develop partnerships and co-productions, as *Opium* focus isn't selling projects created by their own initiative. Nevertheless, in previous circumstances, *Opium* has dreamed to also create its own events and projects, though the pandemic context has reinforced the strategic path the business was taking, and putting aside that possibility for now.

#### *When?*

Once the relationship between culture and economy introduced the concept of creative economy from the EU to territorial policies, *Opium* found a gap in Portugal's cultural management approach: recognising a 20 year delay from cultural approaches in central Europe, it was still very attached to artistic creation, cultural equipment and heritage protection.

Since 2006, the company has pioneered the professional path for cultural management in Portugal following European policies. Once integrated in the EU in 1986, Portugal's investment in culture has been concentrated in public and local infrastructure buildings, and still that tradition lasts. The management would then be handed to the municipalities' perspective, despite the experience they might have.

#### *Why?*

First there was the need to analyse the public impact and protect the value of these cultural investments, traditionally developed by professional librarians and museology administrations from public sector;

Later, the investment started to be distributed to other kind of infrastructures, more connected to artistic and creative production and entrepreneurship. These started to be managed by new cultural foundations, that often would take the perspective of their private market patrons and investors, not necessarily integrated with cultural public policies;

Then, the festivals "boom" and cultural events gathered other kind of territory dynamics that appealed to the integration of touristic professionals more interested in a passing by experience. In each phase, new agents with different practise experiences and interests were gathered, developing the course of cultural economy.

From its foundation, *Opium* noticed a business opportunity: to balance each party's interest and impacts, there was the need for an independent figure, with expertise, skills

and knowledge to manage public policies, the economic market, and the cultural resources distribution and transformation. There was a lack of organised professionals with such diverse and combined experience, so the company has set a differential in Portugal's cultural management market, gathering a team that would offer these services.

#### *Where?*

*Opium's* offices are split in two regions – Porto and Aveiro – what allows a closer connection and knowledge of the territory for lots of local projects in the North and Centre of Portugal, known to be very culturally dynamic and to have diverse regions. For projects in other regions, there may be the need to temporarily subcontract local consulting services that know better the territory, although not all regions have this kind of professionals/services. According to *Opium's* singular experience and team profile, it has national and international reach. Its public projects are divided in four geographical scales, with very different practices:

Local projects with municipalities, most often supporting the management of cultural infrastructures, launching cultural projects, local cultural budget and policies, or funding applications. (*Fabrica da Cerveja- Faro; ECoC bids – Guimarães 2012, Aveiro2027; GNration - Braga;*

Inter Municipal and Regional projects with local networks (*CIM*) and organisations from cultural realm (*DRCN*) or touristic realm (*Turismo do Centro*) where *Opium* takes a hinge role in the complex negotiations for network creation, processes, and partnerships in Portugal. Since the country's structural organisation goes from national to municipal scale without regional administration, the company grows national influence and experience by developing this connection void;

National projects, such as for the Ministry of Culture or *Turismo de Portugal*, are requested upon the need of a more specific skill in an overall project;

International projects, with networks and partnerships, are developed from the integration of international networks, such as *European Festival Association* and *Culture Next* for cities applying to *ECoC*; *Opium* also represents Cultural Management in Portugal in projects with the UN for UNCTAD, working side by side with other agencies representing fellow countries.

#### *Who?*

*Opium* base team is formed by 11 professionals. It is only possible for them to answer to all the complex and diverse projects from the company as they complete each other skills with their personal background, combining different areas. Not only it is a multidisciplinary team, from areas that do not work often together at the same level in projects from other cultural activities, but also each of these professionals represent themselves a unique combination of cross-sector experience: Economy, Culture and Tourism, History, Management and Theatre, Finance and International Studies, Communication and Heritage, Design and Entrepreneurship, Architecture and Cultural Programming, Urban Planning, Territory and Public Administration, to name a few.

This makes each professional a unique piece of the overall engine, covering a whole area and contaminating the diverse experience of their fellow colleagues. To be part of the team there needs to be a flexibility to adapt to different projects. If there is the urgency of an expert in a particular area, their services may be hired accordingly. Sometimes, once a certain area, such as digital integration, starts to be more transversal, Carlos Martins recognises the need to integrate a new collaborator that suits several of the growing needs on the team.

For all these differences to work smoothly, there are some core skills that all *Opium*'s professionals share in common: versatility and curiosity, openness and willingness to learn, explore and research in a different area or context. That allows not only to broaden professional growth but also the company's competitiveness; critical observation, to read and envision the particularities of a specific context, community and territory; both communication and mathematical thinking to be both strategic and measure productivity when working in cooperation; finally, and most important, management envision, to allocate time, budget, resources, expectations, setting a creative challenge to achieve the best from what is available and to be productive. Besides these skills, *Opium*'s professionals also share a professional experience in cultural processes that allows them to become a diversified knowledge base from different perspectives.

The awareness of their professionals' talent, as one of the most differentiating elements from an intellectual property business, has revealed itself to be a wise investment as the pandemic context impacted the employment in the cultural sector. The awareness of its very sensitive and volatile workflow and project cycles has made the company structure restrained in the matter of dependent workforce. In this way, it is able to support and value its core pieces.

For *Opium* growing doesn't necessarily mean expanding to implementation stages, but rather keep the strategic approach. For that reason, it doesn't take other agencies in the cultural management market as competitors. Most often they end up working together as partners, specialised in a particular aspect, and with whom the company also grows. That's why the company finds the need to externalise services from local cultural and territorial consulting teams, some communication (the implementation part), technology and event production.

#### *How?*

Events management was indeed a minor percentage of *Opium*'s projects, and that's why the pandemic didn't have a striking impact on the company's activity, in comparison to most cultural services. The loss this kind of projects represented to the overall income at *Opium* has been more circumscribed.

Nevertheless, the structural changes imposed to cultural processes have been seriously taken in consideration for the company's transformation. Working in a market that needs to be constantly updated with what is coming next on innovation, *Opium* is growing towards the next area to change and become transversal to cultural activity: digital integration. With the sudden crisis brought by *COVID-19* pandemics over cultural events and artistic production, consumption and offer, the technology field is the next professional area exploring cultural economy. For that reason, *Opium* is developing a new project – *Live Art* – as a new company, for the production of artistic and cultural digital contents. It does not aim to change the business' nature, but allow it to reach new opportunities from the cooperation created between the two branches.

The constrains to gather crowds and audiences raised the question on how cultural activity can create value through a digital approach. That will imply a structural change on how physical infrastructure is built and developed, how audiences attend to events, how customers buy products, how businesses monetise their activity, how professionals create their products, how to disseminate and measure its contents.

The mediation services provided by *Opium* foresees a hybrid coexistence between analogic and digital approaches. With online work and digital infrastructure, the company believes that could lead to a democratisation of cultural participation, both for production and consumption of goods and activities, and an influence on related areas such as education, tourism and business. Even though this change of habits increases the need for

cultural services, for analysis and for a transformation strategy, such as developed by *Opium*, Carlos Martins isn't sure yet that the sudden acceleration corresponds necessarily to an opportunity, but perhaps to a challenge. One of them will be to guarantee local identity diversity, so that digital integration doesn't homogenise local cultural processes.

In March 2020 *Opium*'s work environment also felt the need to improve the communication software tools to make the transition to online work from home. Acquiring *Microsoft Teams* business communication platform has allowed the company not only to reach contact between the team members, clients and partners in different locations through instant video call, but also it improved live collaborative work and file sharing management that gets constant updates from customer user experience. The introduction of this tool has reinforced the need to restructure working habits and regulation, so that it can explore a future and more flexible model. Carlos Martins assumes the advantages of that model, where specific daily appointments or professionals' preference leave the choice to work from home or at the office, and trusts it shall keep or improve productivity once both situations become alternative options. There is an awareness that digital integration advantages rely also on a healthy and regular human contact in person, both between the team members, and more specifically with clients and partners.

Especially with some public entities, *Opium*'s experience shows that digital integration is much more difficult to become transversal and adaptable to all services and working habits, as their procedures are more bureaucratic and solutions are often more generic. It makes it understandable that even the Portugal's *Plan for Digital Transition*, which was presented in March 2020, and addresses its third pillar to governmental structures, private, smaller and more autonomous organisations are able to adjust more freely and quicker to the different needs and the constant changes and updates (Portugal Digital, 2020). That raises another challenge where *Opium* finds itself in the mediation position to make a change: articulate different digital integration speeds and contradict the anxiety and retreat from the urgent innovation path the pandemic has pushed forward.

## **2.2 Cultural Product:**

### ***Digital approach on ECoC bids and on Aveiro2027 ECoC bidding process***

#### **2.2.1 Digital approach on 2027 ECoC Bids**

*What?*

The *ECoC* initiative is a Creative Europe project funded by the European Commission to promote the development of cities through culture (Creative Europe, 2021). The title is attributed each year under the name of a city from at least two European countries, but bids for *ECoC* are developed by several contestant cities from those countries for a much longer time.

During a period that precedes and follows the *ECoC* year, the bidding cities are asked to create, implement and measure a long term cultural program on its European dimension. The title is given based on the bid for a future program, not the existing conditions, proposing a realistic transformation. That is only possible to evaluate according to the analysis of the current situation and the coherent interpretation and proposal to what will be happening 6 years ahead. Besides benefiting from the cultural outcomes, the selected cities can be awarded a 1.5 million euros prize funded by the EU Creative Europe Program.

Through this process, several documents are created, compiling references and results from a long term cultural strategy proposal. The bid book is a public document that gives reference not only to understand the proposal in comparison to the implementation, but also to allow an analysis on how certain subjects, such as digital approach, are addressed in different future cultural practises.

### *Why?*

The initiative aims to get people from different European countries to learn and work with each other, developing a sense of belonging to a community and territory. It is **achieved** from promoting and celebrating both values shared in common and the diversity and uniqueness of each region during the bidding process and the following events.

As projects for long-term cultural strategy, *ECoC* bidding processes incorporate the responsibility to lead and integrate European policies in local communities. They open future paths for cultural development, such as digital integration, going beyond immediate solutions to answer current constrains.

Sometimes there is the need to adapt to major context changes, such as the cancellations and postponed programming as announced by the *European Commission Coronavirus Response* (2020.09), or to update specific guidelines for Creative Europe Program (European Commission, 2020.06.22). There are still further developments to be done to the *ECoC* guidelines, taking in consideration that the digital approach became a pre-existing infrastructural condition, and not a last moment resource (Travkina, *et.al.* 2020)

The first in line *ECoC* bid to be completely developed after the circumstances raised by *COVID-19* pandemic will be Portugal and Latvia, which will take place in 2027, and for that reason, they should represent a new paradigm to the subject.

### *Who, when and where?*

Proposed by the Greek Culture Minister Melina Mercouri, since 1985 the European Commission has awarded the title to more than 60 cities (European Commission, n.d.). Portugal has held the event in Lisbon (1993), in Porto (2001) and in Guimarães (2012). In the current model (European Parliament, 2014), each year two cities from different EU countries are designated *ECoC*<sup>3</sup>. According to the number of EU member states, the countries are regularly distributed through the following years, meaning that the Portuguese and Latvian cities knew they'd be bidding for the title in 2027 at least since 2014 (European Parliament, 2014).

The bidding process starts 6 years prior to the event. First, the designated countries make a formal invitation for their cities to apply. During the next 10 months an announcement is made for each city running for *ECoC* and a cultural management team develops their bid book. Following the established criteria, an international panel of 12 experts shortlists which applicants will continue to the run for the title and give them the opportunity to clarify some more detailed information in their bid. After that, and four years prior to the event taking place, only one city is designated to hold the title. During the following period, it is expected to embed the bid's long-term strategy and validate some results until the event is held so that the monetary prize is awarded. This period allows citizens to engage with the process and the international expert panel to support the strategy implementation, guaranteeing the event has a deeper transformation and impact for the community and for the European cooperation.

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<sup>3</sup> In 2000 the new framework has open the opportunity also for cities from E.U. potential or candidate countries, or from EFTA/EEA member states. From 2017 amendment, this opportunity has been set more regularly around each three years for an extra third city from any of these countries to bid, competing against each other, to also hold title and develop the project (European Parliament, 2017)

The title is awarded for one year. However, due to future uncertainty after several events cancelled and postponed caused by the pandemic context, in August 2020 both capitals presenting in 2020 – Galway (Ireland) and Rijeka (Croatia) - had their title prolonged till 30 April 2021. Consequently, and considering safety regulations and travelling restrictions for both public and international partnerships, some *ECoC* following 2021 have also been postponed: Novi Sad (Serbia) to 2022 – with Kaunas (Lithuania) and Esch (Luxembourg); Timisoara (Romania) and Elefsina (Greece) to 2023 – with Veszprém (Hungary) (European Commission, 2020.08.18).

After the event is held for 1 year, the process hasn't finished yet. By the end of the following year, the awarded cities have to produce a report and continue to participate on the support to other cities applying for future *ECoC*.

### *How?*

The selection criteria is based in specific questions following six categories: *Contribution to the long-term strategy, European dimension, Cultural and artistic content, Capacity to deliver, Outreach and Management*. (GEPAC, 2020) Although it is evaluated the innovation brought to traditional cultural expressions and digital communication channels, when focusing on some specific questions, such as the contingency plan, the digital approach is not mentioned on the criteria factors at the time the call has been presented in Portugal.

The project's implementation has changed since the first *ECoC* took place. Originally in the 1980's and early 1990's it was focus on an event that took place on cities naturally known for their cultural value, deeply associated to the arts (Capital Europeia da Cultura Portugal 2027, 2021). During the late 1990's and 2000's it invested more in cultural infrastructure as an urban regeneration strategy, increasing the relevance of the monetary prize and having tourism attraction as one of the main outcomes (Immler *et al.* 2014). From that experience, through the 2010's it started to develop a bit more the cultural agents and practises through wider urban areas, attributing an international quality label. For the 2020's, the implementation focus more on integrating and managing a wider regional scope, promoting the gathering of both local traditions and European innovation for cooperation and identity values.

The evolution of culture's assessment has influenced periodic revisions of *ECoC*'s guidelines, the latest one is for the new cycle of *ECoC* between 2020 and 2032 (European Commission, 2017). As in the past it had been needed to enhance with more precision the European dimension in "(...) a tittle *for* Europe and not *from* Europe (...)" (Immler *et al.* 2014:24), the current context has raised the need for *ECoC* to address digitalisation as a transversal priority. Nevertheless, the current revision for 12 years ahead is quite long to take in consideration the fast context changes, to which the cultural sector is so sensitive.

As a Creative Europe project, *ECoC* bids are a broad opportunity, in time and geography, to propose experiments and innovation on digitalisation processes for audience development and creation of new business models, and not only to be a theme, a digital archive or simply exist on the web. However, on the current guidelines from the Culture sub-program for *European Cooperation Projects 2020*, which *ECoC* are a part of, digitalisation still shows up as an optional branch out of seven priorities, being only mandatory to address one to two of them in the European Commission<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> The guidelines from the Culture sub-program for *European Cooperation Projects 2020* defines five main priorities to achieve their goals: *transnational mobility, audience development, capacity building, intercultural dialogue and social integration of migrants and refugees, and legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018*. *Digitalisation* is one of the three possible branches for *capacity building*. (European Commission,2019:4)

The *Appendix C* shows a benchmarking of some digital practices and approaches proposed in bid books addressing digitalisation as a strategic priority: *Galway2020* (2016), taking place during the break of the pandemic (along with *Rijeka2020*); *Bad Ischl2024* (2019), as the last winning bid submitted before the pandemic, and *Chemnitz2025* (2020), being their last version bid-book the first submitted after the pandemic context, on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020.<sup>5</sup> From the comparison between them it's possible to identify an evolution:

Galway's bid book proposed to revolutionize the way in which people remotely experience and participate in culture (Galway2020, 2016). With nearly 60% of the projects in the programme to be entirely or significantly digital, the outbreak of the pandemic would still take by surprise the original goals and compromise the program's implementation. Its digital approach proposed an ambitious experimental format as a subject for research and discussion to its role on CCI;

Bad Ischl digital strategy is to transform the scale of local awareness and production in a global context (Bad Ischl2024, 2019). Even though the aim is also directed to audience scale, the digital realm is a format taken as an operative resource adapted to their specific local reality, and no longer an experimental subject;

Chemnitz presented their last version of the bid book in 2020, assuming the digital integration already as a given reality of the hybrid format, where both digital and analogic elements work combined and not alternating. *Chemnitz2025* (2020) is assumed as an opportunity for the city's *culture-making* practise to become materialised in an operational digital tool alike the city itself<sup>6</sup>. The digital development no longer aims to be about quantity, but rather as a quality request;

In all three cases it has been identified several digital touch points that allows for the interpretation of their digital strategies. These examples have been organised by four main digital formats with different functions: new tools and contents, access distribution (broadcasting), mobile and digital infrastructure (apps and platforms), and social media interaction. As recommended by the guide to prepare cities for the bid (European Commission, 2017:13), the analysis of these bid books has been the first step of this internship and the work developed by *Opium* for *Aveiro2027*'s bid process.

### 2.2.2 Opium on Aveiro2027 ECoC bidding process

*What?*

*Opium*'s team is the one developing Aveiro's bid for 2027 *ECoC*. They are responsible for writing the bid, but also to implement the city's strategic plan for culture and program for *ECoC* bid.

*Why?*

According to Carlos Martins interview (*Appendix B*), besides the practical commercial purpose, this project allows the company to lead an international policy making program at the company's close area of influence and experience in Portugal's *Centro* Region. It represents a big commitment for local management through cultural investment and development. The process launched for the bid's purpose will continue regardless of it winning the title or not. All in all, it represents a new set for future opportunities, challenges and quality demand in *Opium*'s business area and geographic expertise.

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<sup>5</sup>All these examples already follow the *ECoC* guidelines updated in 2014.

<sup>6</sup>*Chemnitz2025* platform (in development)

So far the main pillars announced for *Aveiro2027* bid are *Culture, Nature, Tech & Soul*, under the slogan “And that Changes Everything”(Aveiro2027, 2021). This foresees a particular connection to their artistic heritage, their natural landscapes and traditions around Aveiro’s Lake and the innovation supported from Aveiro University and technological projects and businesses.

#### *Who?*

GEPAC is the governmental organisation responsible to manage the process in Portugal. On October 2020 it has announced the support of 25 million euros to the winning city in Portugal (Capital Europeia da Cultura Portugal 2027, 2020). Differently to the last *ECOC* that took place in Portugal, according to Jorge Barreto Xavier, delegate from Oeiras2027 bid, this time it won’t be the Government to be indicating the city to get the title, even though it is represented in the international panel formed by the European Commission (Franco, 2020).

The municipality from Aveiro is assumed as *Opium*’s cliente for the *ECOC* bid project. Besides them and the Regional Community, other local strategic partners involved in the process are Aveiro University and AIDA- *Câmara de Comércio e Indústria do Distrito de Aveiro*.

Carlos Martins from *Opium* is also part of the Executive Commission (Aveiro, Câmara Municipal, 2020.11.19). The connection of Aveiro’s bid with the technologic scope is rooted, from the beginning, taking advantage of its single connection in Portugal with the project *AVEIRO STEAM CITY* from UIA/European Commission (UIA, 2021).

Besides institutional co-promoters, the success of the project depends on the engagement of citizens and private sector, for what the process is a participatory action, developed with educational institutions, local and cultural professional or amateur associations and individuals, cultural and creative business as well as other economic sectors, international arts and cultural operators and networks, working alongside the other countries’ *ECOC* cities (European Commission, 2017).

#### *Where?*

Besides Aveiro’s bid, other 10 cities have announced to be bidding for 2027 *ECOC* in Portugal: Braga (Braga’27, 2021), Coimbra, Évora (Évora2027, 2021), Faro (Faro2027, 2021) Funchal (Fnchal2027, 2021), Guarda (Guarda2027, 2021), Leiria (Rede Cultura 2027, 2021), Oeiras (Oeiras27, 2021), Ponta Delgada (Azores2027, 2021) and Viana do Castelo. This has not only raised the interest on culture as a strategic urban developer, it has also distributed the bidding process through all the regions, gathering Portugal’s diverse territory towards European values.

Although Aveiro leads the bidding process, the whole Region of Aveiro is part of it, including the 11 municipalities from CIRA- *Comunidade Inter-Regional de Aveiro*: Águeda, Albergaria-a-Velha, Anadia, Aveiro, Estarreja, Ílhavo, Murtosa, Oliveira do Bairro, Ovar, Sever do Vouga and Vagos.



Figure 1. Portugal's 2027 ECoC Information Website (Capital Europeia da Cultura, 2021)



Figure 2. Aveiro2027 logo (Aveiro2027, 2021).

### *When?*

The Portuguese official invitation for cities to bid for 2027 *ECoC* was announced the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 by *GEPAC* (2020). The submission will be on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2021, and the pre-selection meeting and report will be handed in during the first trimester of 2022. The final decision will be taken in the turning of 2022 to 2023 (*GEPAC*, 2020).

Nevertheless, experience shows that successful *ECoC* candidates start to get prepared two to three years prior to the official invitation, as a commitment on the cities priorities, and not for the sake of the title alone itself (*European Commission*, 2017).

In 2018 several applicant municipalities have contacted *Opium* to develop the bid, taking in consideration their previous experience in *ECoC* winning processes (*Guimarães*2012) and European projects. At the end of that year, *Opium* started to work with Aveiro's Municipality.

As in other *ECoC* application processes, *Opium* has firstly recommended the development of a strategic plan for culture in Aveiro as a prior request, so that the municipality would establish their cultural commitment on public policies beyond the *ECoC* title. This stage has been developed by *Opium* and presented in May 2019 (*Aveiro, Câmara Municipal*, 2019.05), and has served as an instrument to reflect on the goals, needs and advantages of Aveiro's bid. As a result, Aveiro has been the first of the applicant cities to start that path, publically announcing they would be bidding on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2019.

Since then, they have already developed the management model, the representative committee (honour committee, strategic council, and executive council). It has been started the international networks and partnerships agreements, chosen the city's executive board, the bidding calendar, and it has then been started the community participation processes and communication campaign. Those last two stages being developed have been delayed with the renovation of lockdown measures to control the pandemics in the beginning of 2021.

### *How?*

During 2020 Aveiro's municipality took the lead on supporting the cultural sector with a program called "Cultura em Tempos de (In)certeza" following Aveiro2027's slogan "And that changes everything" (*Aveiro Câmara Municipal*, 2020.06.02). Showing commitment to the bid, it announced an intervention on cultural infrastructure, focusing particularly on the support of mobile services and technologic facilities; Cultural programming, assuming the ticket office breaks, and launching a new platform for digital display named *Criatech Digital Festival* through the year (*Criatech*, 2021); Outdoor festival events and installations, more distributed through time and space; the reinforcement of a digital strategy for a better communication interaction, media content display, digital cycle programming and events, online presence and online campaigns; New funds and support to the arts with anticipated contracts with local cultural business, grants, digital art and illustration commissions, reinforcement of public libraries from local bookshops, use of public facilities, communication channels, edition and sales for presentation of creative agents, raising the value of prizes from *Bienal Internacional de Cerâmica Artística de Aveiro*, and funding to 55 cultural association from the municipality; New networks and partnerships, from local to national reach; Online training and mentorship with national and international tutors; Social and economic support for associations and refunds. This has been a statement showing coordination between goals determined by the Strategic plan and the preparation of the *ECoC* bid plan.



Figure 3. CIRA's Municipalities' map (Região de Aveiro, 2021)

After those first measures from the municipality, the communication campaign, the launching of their Platform for digital content display (Criatech, 2021) and their online newsletter (Aveiro2027, 2021-b), have been, so far, *Aveiro2027* bid's actions on digital strategy during lockdown period in 2021. The campaign waited for lockdown measures to be less restrictive and to be started on March 24<sup>th</sup>. It has used illustration and text to pass a message on confidence on culture, after a period when that has been more difficult to express it face to face. It has remained the focus of the communication campaign during April, appealing to a new generation to take part as digital influencers, sharing the bid's messages during this year through social media (Aveiro, Câmara Municipal, 2021- a). Some calls and event programming with digital media content have also been shared on the bid's communication channels.

Meanwhile, till that date, other cities bidding have developed other digital touch points and strategies. Based on the activity of their social media channels, websites and platforms, it has been possible to register the following approaches:

- Braga has taken the same period to work on citizen representation and participation. It has been presenting a video communication campaign and radio interviews with their citizens and creative professionals, sharing personal and diverse perspectives over Braga's cultural connection; promoting the interaction to contributing with ideas; opening the call for 2027's bid program, while keeping the bid team present in social media events, debates and celebrative themed contents, not disregarding material elements such as a printed newspaper.
- Coimbra put their digital strategy to affirm itself as a national and institutional reference, developing several online cultural events on each official bid ceremony, sharing live debates and testimonials, anchored by the popularity of main-stream national artists in social media, and associating their connection to Europe through the cultural programming of 2021 Presidency of European Council.
- Faro explored the duality of physical and digital space in the city's cultural activity. Addressing their modernist heritage whilst running in a series of online debates and webinars, these actions have promoted both the participation and inputs from their citizens and local creative professionals to address current challenges and the integration of European cultural networks. Some of the actions address particular audiences, such as schools and children to take part in digital building games and programs as educational tools to play with the city's identity.
- Funchal reinforced the mobility opportunities brought by digital access from its insular peripheral location to meet and distribute culture from further places. That has been the focus of the webinar "Porto Santo Charter", also supported by the Portuguese Presidency of European Council, amongst other debates with international creative agents with Portuguese influence. Similar to Braga, they've also launched the call for their bid's programming after a series of webinars with training for local cultural professionals and associations that have seen their own work promoted and discussed on their digital channels;
- Évora has focus on creating a shared identity for their bid, developing a collaborative design campaign and workshops for their visual identity, creating a documentary series and video campaign raising awareness on the bid's identity subjects, and digitally mediated access to the city archive and other cultural agents and infrastructure;
- Taking in consideration their aged and sparse territory, Guarda has keep their digital approach mostly informative on the gather of cultural offer and programming from the different locations that take part in their regional bid. It has been transformed into a



Figure 4. Logos from Portugal 2027 ECoC bidding cities (from left to right, top to bottom): Braga '27 (2021), Coimbra 2027 (2021.), Évora2027 (2021), Faro2027 (2021), Funchal 2027 (2021), Guarda 2027 (2021), Rede Cultura2027 (2021), Oeiras27 (2021), and Azores2027 (2021)



Figure 5. Aveiro2027 May 2021 communication campaign (Aveiro2027, 2021)

shared cultural agenda, although it has been developed mostly into a printed version. The city's bid has also shared the participation on some webinars and digital improvements in cultural infrastructures and launched an innovation platform to a younger generation. But clearly, the bid focus on the appeal to in presence experiences, through design, artistic residences and a programming boost, dedicated to digital art particularly.

- Leiria keeps a more operative tone, combining both analogic and online experiences. The webinars and online events have addressed more specific current challenges, focusing on museums and digital artistic practices such as photography. Nevertheless, many other subjects and practises have been addressed during the past years and are displayed on-demand in a streaming channel. Their website also presents a database tool for cultural professionals to submit their contacts, a mapping tool for stories associated to their territory and shared by their own citizens, and a cultural agenda already split into physical and online events.
- Oeiras has chosen to affirm literature as their most representative expression, presenting a series of online events and talks on demand, a partnership for radio programming, and some video participation from local schools and citizens on poetry;
- Ponta Delgada proposes to be an open door both for Europe and the local community. The bid has started to share information on good practises and access to participation of Azorean cultural professionals in national webinars regarding *ECoC* bidding process. Having announced the bid later than others, they didn't have much opportunity yet to explore further digital approaches, though it has been present since the beginning addressing specific targets on European integration for culture.
- As for Viana do Castelo there is only an announced intention, though it hasn't developed any other touch points yet.

The digital approach from this particular *ECoC 2027* bids position themselves with a first idea of how they answer to the current challenges for integrating the public participation in the bidding process. Holding on the programmed activity works against achieving successful results to report on the bid's submission. The flow of activity and interaction expresses how cultural intervention works as an extent of local management action and priorities. Besides, in order to achieve a transversal digital integration it takes time to plan. For that reason, there is a great expectation on what will be the next steps presented by *Aveiro2027*'s bid, taking consideration the high level technologic resources claimed. Rather than another *ECoC* process, the success of this project's strategy to *Opium* can set the team as a reference for digital integration in cultural management not only in the region, but also internationally.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 *The Report's Methodology*

This report is divided in three methodological stages, in parallel to the different parts proposed on the internship's structure. These three stages are also present in each content presented, and subdivided according to the *5 W's 1H* question method (Sloan, 2010).

The first stage is about *context*. During the internship, the development of a *Database for Cultural Infrastructure* has been the first task. It aimed to gather, confront and process the references of what existed before, and formulate the needs for further development. The context stage of this report is presented through the *Index, Introduction, State of the Art* and *Methodology* chapters. They enunciate the problem, collect related references of previous and current circumstances, and define the internship's approach on digital integration in Cultural Management practises and the proposal of physical and digital touch points during Aveiro *ECoC* bidding process.

The *State of the Art* needed to frame digital integration both on a cultural practise, such as Cultural Management, in particular at *Opium*, and on the cultural product developed at the internship, regarding *ECoC* bidding processes, specially the case of Portuguese ones like Aveiro's.

As references for a general context, several official communications and guidelines from European Commission (Creative Europe Program), national and governmental (GEPAC) were used to frame the context, as well as studies published by international organisations such as UNESCO, UCLG, KEA European Affairs and Ernest & Young.

For the particular case of *Opium*, I've interviewed its director Carlos Martins on his perspective over the subject of digital integration and cultural management in Portugal, in his company, and particularly in Aveiro's *ECoC* bidding process (*Appendix B*). As to confront *Opium*'s work and Aveiro's bid process with other *ECoC* bids, I have developed a benchmarking of good practises from cultural management organisations and platforms and on bid books for current and future *ECoC* (*Appendix C*). I have also addressed digital integration during the break of *COVID-19* pandemics as a paradigmatic changing event. Three different timings aim to confront an evolution on the approach: taking place during the pandemic (*Galway2020*), bidding before the pandemic and taking place after it (*Bad Ischl2024*) and the first bidding already during the pandemic (*Chemnitz2025*). As for the information from other Portuguese bidding processes, so far, it has only been possible to follow their digital channels activity (platforms, social media, agendas and related press).

The second stage is for *proposing*. In the internship, that corresponded to the second task related to the action plan *Programme of a hybrid Digital and Physical Infrastructure* from Aveiro's cultural strategy to support *Aveiro2027* bid. For that, there has been a selection of needs, a description of criteria of what to create, why, who with, where and how, considering both digital and physical infrastructure. On this report, this part presents the tasks and elements produced that took place during the internship, corresponding to both chapters related to Aveiro's database of cultural infrastructure and the proposal for physical and digital infrastructure. The references are based on the work developed during the internship, so both contents shared by *Opium*'s team and the Municipality, as well as references of international examples on the matter proposed by my initiative. A constant reference throughout these tasks the *Strategic Plan for Aveiro's Culture* (2019) has been a constant guideline to confront the contents developed with the existing results.

The last stage from this methodology is *balance*. From the contributions for *Aveiro2027*'s

bid, the internship has presented the opportunity to apply that experience into other cultural management and consultancy projects. The two different experiences allowed to relate, evaluate and compile what has been learnt from them. This report opens a debate and expresses a broader perspective on how digital integration has been introduced in a cultural management practise, particularly related to 2027 *ECoC* bids. The third chapter demonstrates a critical and personal perspective on the methodology developed at *ECoC* bidding processes, distinguishing what can be applied to other projects, and some final considerations on the projects developed and on the internship experience.

### **3.2 Opium's Hybrid Online/In Presence Methodology**

#### *What*

*(context)* The internship's methodology has been presented and developed in discussion with Carlos Martins - *Opium*'s director, Isabel Reis - the project manager – and myself in a meeting at *Opium*'s studio in Aveiro on July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020.

*(proposal)* We have decided to start at the end of September, in a mixed practise of office and online work, according to the health measures taken to control the COVID-19 pandemics recommended by the National Health Office (*DGS*) at the time.

*(balance)* Even though it was supposed to alternate between the two formats, with at least two days a week at the office, in the mid of October, the need to control the spread of the pandemics increased, and online work became the constant practise at *Opium* till the end of the internship on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2021.

#### *Who*

*(context)* Each project I've developed through the internship has been presented first with the participation of all the team elements involved, project manager and company director, as a common base of share and debate.

*(proposal)* Through the course of the project, my contributions for *Aveiro2027* bidding process were developed autonomously. Whenever needed, either the collaborators or the team manager would schedule a status report with the ones involved, promoting a sense of self management and team work. Besides *Aveiro2027*'s bidding process, I had the opportunity to work on another project in pairs and split tasks, as a different experience.

*(balance)* At a certain point, upon some structured developments, the director would be asked to participate for a mid-term balance. By the end of each delivered element, it would be either presented to the team and its management or sent by email for further revision and documentation, not necessarily being discussed at the same moment. Some balances were often shared already during the next stages/projects if related;

#### *Why*

*(context)* The first meeting, and the following ones, would serve to update the projects' purpose and goals, as most of the context and proposal would be developed from then on in great autonomy.

*(proposal)* During the proposal stage, the need for updates was met with different frequencies depending on each project, and on the client's participation on it: once they were involved in the work process, it would be more frequent the need of discussion and changes of course and schedules; when the client was the final user of a hired service, such as in *Aveiro2027 ECOC* bid, it would be a more continuous and autonomous work and time management.



*Figure 6. Printscreen from Opium's team online workspace at Microsoft Teams. (left to right, top to bottom): Mariana Roque, Catarina Braga, Isabel Reis, Sofia Lopes, Elisa Santos, Diana Lima, Marta Correia and Tiago Azevedo (11.12.2020)*

*(balance)* By the end of the process, the results achieved would be put into the clients' perspective, for communication purposes, so the message would be clear, empathic and easily assimilated, as it would be then up to the client to apply the content created.

#### *How*

*(context)* Before starting any task, I was asked to research on suggested references from both *Opium's* team databases, but also from the client. The data base would start from a shared common knowledge, and from then on, I'd be researching for other new references that could add value to the proposal, always integrated in an evolution of both the team and the clients' awareness.

*(proposal)* My contribution would be based on defining criteria, according to the specific needs and agents in the process. To express my ideas, I was then asked to develop a structure for their text and graphic communication. As present in this internship report, and in consequence of the projects' three-way stage development– *Context, Proposal, Balance* – I've chosen a classical method for presenting the project through the Aristotelian 5 *W's 1H* question method (Sloan, 2010), commonly used for information gathering and problem solving on project management and digital platforms. (Adobe Workfront, 2018). Quite often it was needed to extend the characterisation of indicators and methodological approach, adapt them, so that it could work as guidelines for the users to be able to understand how they could be applied.

*(balance)* In some occasions during the project, I was asked to present orally and graphically the idea. In conclusion of the project, I produced a summary report with key point indicators and graphic and statistic information. That could work as a model/sample on how the ideas could be materialised, a conceptual organogram, standard examples and description of public references, avoiding to outline particular cases from private sector. Also it should be transmitted through a calendar of implementation actions.

#### *When*

*(context)* As a first step after presenting the internship tasks and program, I was asked to develop a calendar to manage each task, according to a deadline or percentage of importance.

*(proposal)* I was given autonomy to propose the distribution of time for each element, and it would be discussed with the rest of the team and updated through time, according to the evolution of the work frame. In the same way, I was asked to propose a schedule on the implementation of each content created, transforming something that was an idea and then a project that could be put into practise.

*(balance)* Even though the implementation of the projects were not necessarily in the same timeline as the one of the internship, the duration of the three tasks to be presented were discussed and adapted under the project manager's orientation in terms of needs and workflow feedback. Unfortunately, the expectation to take part on the implementation and community participation processes haven't coincide. As pandemic-related restrictions led to a delay on the implementation part, the internship didn't give the opportunity to contact directly with the local reality.

#### *Where*

*(context)* *Opium's* online workspace was access through Microsoft Teams, a business communication platform that allows the synchronisation of email, calendar, video call, chat and file storage. Even though it is meant to work with guest collaborators, such as my position as intern, not all actions are accessed for those users, such as uploading files and visualisation of the folder of the organisation. For that reason, even though calendar

and notifications were synchronised, there would be often the need to download and work on my own files, and then send them through email. When we were working on collaborative documents created by the team's members, I'd be able to edit and participate on them. File updates would often demand the organisation, format and evolution of work to be managed autonomously. There would be the need to explain and notify each version through email, a process that would become very demanding in terms of management, both for the sender and receptor.

At *Opium*'s physical workplace there were several offices, allowing physical distancing and autonomy between workers, at spacious and transparent spaces. Even though the team members were alternating the days at the office, there were several common spaces for discussing impressions and ideas without the need of formal notification for team gathering. This physical work environment reflects the online work environment chosen by *Opium* where autonomy and accessibility were a big part of it.

*(proposal)* As most of the documents developed have been created autonomously, I was given the choice to use my preferred software, as long as compatible with the rest of the team. *Microsoft Excel* has become a prior tool for collecting and organising information, process statistics and create databases; other text and graphic elements have been developed with *Microsoft Word*, *PowerPoint* and *InDesign*. As for mapping tools, I've given access to a shared google maps file. Without the possibility to work close by the community and get in direct contact with cultural agents involved in the *ECoC* bidding process, social media, online agenda and digital updated presence have been the possible touch points with ongoing activity. This perspective has enhanced the contrast between what was displayed online and what was the real activity taking place; for that, the feedback from collaborators with onsite experience has been quite relevant.

*(balance)* Working mostly from home required extra attention to keep the practise integrated with the company's goals. For that reason I've found the need to punctually request some other moments to exchange feedback on the work developed, its usage, and a critical opinion based on real life contact. These contacts have been crucial to keep my contribution focused and motivated for a clear target, following the initial connection from in presence contact.

## 4 DEVELOPMENT OF A DATABASE FOR CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

### 4.1 Context

#### *What*

"The list is the origin of culture. It's part of the history of art and literature. What does culture want? To make infinity comprehensible. It also wants to create order - not always, but often." (Beyer *et al.*, 2009)<sup>7</sup>.

The Umberto Eco's quote has been referenced by Isabel Reis, project manager at *Opium*, upon introducing the first part of the internship: *to develop a database of Aveiro's cultural infrastructure and to present it through the proposal of a mapping tool*. This task would be done using empiric information, gathered from several documents and online sources, and using the experience of a previous focus group with some of Aveiro's cultural agents developed by *Opium* for *Aveiro's Strategic plan for Culture* (2019). The task included the development of the following elements: A *calendar* of the working plan for the task; a *table*, listing the existing cultural infrastructure currently active, their classification and characteristics; a *map* to display the geographical distribution of the city's cultural infrastructure; a *presentation* of the main results and the aim of a future operative tool for interactive cultural mapping.

#### *Why*

Gathering information on the cultural infrastructure offer in Aveiro has been the starting point to know what the city has and what the city needs, so it can be shared by all the ones interested. The awareness of this information is not exclusive for the cultural management and municipality teams to use and integrate on *Aveiro 2027's* bid book. One of the most important criteria from a *ECoC* bid is the public engagement with the values of the project and its participation throughout the process. For that, the database proposes an organisation of a sample of contents regarding cultural infrastructure, to label the organisation for an interactive digital tool for public browsing, submission of content by local cultural agents, and current needs for investors.

At this stage, the content of the database aims to depict Aveiro's cultural infrastructure offer and type of ongoing investment programs and to define infrastructural needs, future investments and calendar during the 2027 *ECoC* bid period, distinguishing new infrastructure or improvements on existing ones. Personally, collecting and organising this information made me also get into Aveiro's cultural dynamic, to base some further proposals.

#### *Who*

*Opium's* team developing *Aveiro2027* bidding process gathered my collaboration as intern to create this cultural mapping database; the contribution of Mariana Roque (architect, producer), responsible for content editing and writing the bid book contents; Diana Lima (communication designer), responsible for managing and developing the bid book communication and actions; the supervision from Isabel Reis, project manager for *Aveiro2027's* bidding process; and Carlos Martins, on an intermediate evaluation and orientation of the process development.

The Municipality would also be represented through the executive team of *Aveiro2027's* bid, although it hasn't establish direct contact in common meetings. Other *Opium's*

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<sup>7</sup> Spiegel Interview on Umberto Eco's "The Infinity of Lists"(2009).

collaborators, such as Ana Pedrosa from Porto's office, has also contributed whenever necessary to share her experience on a similar purpose. Although her reference has set the start of this work, this database should reflect the specificity of each context, and therefore Aveiro's database should express that.

### *When*

This stage has been scheduled for four weeks, starting from September 21<sup>st</sup>: the first week was programmed to schedule the task, take notes from the references, launch the table document with some of the information available on the current databases, check what kind of information was available and what would be needed to complete it; the second week was dedicated to organise the information collected, propose a methodology and some main indicators for the table and map; on the third week, an intermediate internal presentation took place to discuss the results collected so far and the proposed organisation structure; during the fourth week there has been the need to make the adjustments discussed during the intermediate meeting, focusing on the discussed structure. An extra week was required to update the presentation and work on its communication, whilst the report for the second part of the project started to be developed at the same time.

### *Where*

Even though *Aveiro2027* bid is a regional one, this database was suggested to start from a sample of buildings in Aveiro municipality as an example. One of the requests was for the database to put into context the current building investments, funding programs of urban intervention, priority areas and developments on heritage and cultural site management. This information was gathered from territorial plans such as the *Municipal Directory Plan* (Aveiro, Câmara Municipal, 2019.11-a) on future interventions, the *REOT 2015 - Report on the State of Territory Planning in Aveiro* (Aveiro, Câmara Municipal, 2015) on the results from previous implementation of the *Directory Plan*, and *PEDUCA – The Strategic Plan for the Urban Development of Aveiro City* (Aveiro Câmara Municipal, 2018), with particular emphasis on the *PARU (Action Plan for Urban Regeneration)* that describes the distribution of funding investments through priority areas and buildings. From *PEDUCA*, it has also been published in 2019 an *Operation on Urban Regeneration - ORU* (Município de Aveiro, 2019.08) on the *Area of Urban Regeneration - ARU* (Município de Aveiro, 2016) defined as priority for intervention in Aveiro. This information is mapped also through Aveiro Municipality's platform (Aveiro, Câmara Municipal, 2021-a) where these investments are described.

In the bid book this information would be supplemented with extra information on mobility<sup>8</sup> and touristic accommodation conditions. All these information also sustained the following step for a proposal.

### *How*

Proposing a database to create a mapping platform for cultural infrastructure started by collecting databases from the municipality and *CIRA*, shared by *Opium*'s team, and the ones developed by *Opium* in previous projects for Aveiro. From that information, there was a need to add other sources of information on different scales and parameters. There was also the need to update the existing lists according to their current cultural activity.

On a national administration level it has been consulted the cultural atlas from *Direção Regional de Cultura do Centro* (DRCC, 2018); the browsing platform from *Direção*

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<sup>8</sup> Plan for urban sustainable mobility – PMUS, from *PEDUCA* and *Plano Intermunicipal de Mobilidade e Transportes da Região de Aveiro* from *CIRA* (Região de Aveiro, n.d.)

*Geral de Gestão do Património Cultural* (DGPC, 2021-a), with an *ArcGIS* atlas platform on classified and under classification heritage process (DGPC, 2021-b) and the *Sistema de Informação para o Património Arquitectónico* (SIPA, 2016) to confirm the identification and classification of some of the cultural infrastructures in Aveiro; the *Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Centro* (CCDRC, 2011); The *Museus de Portugal* browsing platform (Museus de Portugal, 2014), and the directories from *Rede Nacional de Bibliotecas Públicas* (RNBP, 2021) and *Rede de Bibliotecas Escolares* (RBE, 2021).

At the level of local administration, it has been consulted the official Municipal website (Aveiro, Camara Municipal n.d.-b) to confirm the information on some of the cultural associations, cultural buildings, cultural networks (Museu da Cidade de Aveiro, n.d.), municipal press - *Boletim Municipal* (Aveiro, Camara Municipal 2021-a), cultural agenda and events, like the city cultural program *Cultura Perto de Si*, taking place on smaller scale at local cultural buildings (Aveiro, Câmara Municipal, 2020.09); the directories from *Rede de Bibliotecas Municipais da Região de Aveiro* (RBMRA, 2021) and *Rede Bibliotecas Municipais de Aveiro* (RBMA, 2021).

Some complementary directories like *Portal d'Aveiro* (2021), *guiadeaveiro.net* (ARKISCOM, n.d.), and the direct webpage, platform or social media from each listed case has also enabled to complete the information needed for the proposed database.

Mapping each element through a google maps file allowed to confirm the address and match it with an existing building, whenever needed. To verify ongoing cultural activity on those places, social media, cultural agendas and business information platforms, such as *Racius* (2021), have been a way to confirm they had been running during a period of at least one year.

As a reference of what would be expected to develop as a database, the team has first organised an online meeting to debate ideas with Ana Pedrosa, project manager at *Opium* at Porto's office, who has led before the creation of a similar database for Faro's municipality. The discussion of that database and its final report guided some of the initial launch of the task for Aveiro's case.

As further orientation for the creation of the database, *Aveiro2027* bid project manager, Isabel Reis, has also shared some examples of international cultural mapping platforms that could be created from the information processed.

## 4.2 Propose

### Step 1 – Establish the Purpose

(context) The database's goal was to propose the organisation of information for a future digital interactive platform to measure the evolution on offer and needs of cultural infrastructure. Getting back to the database purpose has been a constant orientation through the process. As information would get denser and more complex, it was needed to think on what would be its usage and whom would be its users. To be accessed and submitted in a public digital platform, the organisation of information required to be intuitive, with clear alternatives, self-explaining language, and concrete and familiar concepts. Often, there was the need to create a practical example or a persona to test how certain information would be perceived from the different users that would access it, focusing on what kind of information would they be looking for.

In terms of digital interaction, there was the need to create a limited and sequenced number of alternative and excluding options, for it to be both user friendly to submit and

search, and simple to program and edit the platform by a web developing team. For the current database, it was important to focus on the existing facilities, being the needs identified by the users' interaction with it. For that reason, it was thought what kind of information would be analysed from the blank category fields completed once the digital platform would be activated.

Only when a vast majority of the cultural infrastructure examples from Aveiro were submitted was it possible to understand what kind of information would be relevant. The final organisation resulted from an adaptation of Aveiro's cultural infrastructure offer.

### Step 2 – *Define Parameters and Criteria*

*(context)* To create a database, there was the need to define the concept of what was being listed and establish parameters for a selection criteria, carefully considering the inclusivity implied on each word. From the beginning, the goal was to map cultural infrastructures, meaning physical long-term structures located in Aveiro's council and performing cultural activities. *Location* would be the first defined category. This was already suggested by the format of this database – the map - and the source of its information– google maps location. This would be converted into the first category to describe each case.

Further criteria had to do with the *Program*, the second category, addressing both cultural activity and content as parameters. Respectively, for cultural activity, it was considered all the structures open to the public and running a cultural purpose or program for the period of the preceding 12 months. Defining the kind of cultural activity, the selected elements should integrate one of the three cycles of the culture value chain defined by the methodology proposed in Aveiro's Strategic Plan for Culture (2019): *Cultural Creation*, *Cultural Exhibition* and *Artistic Education/ Training/ Research*. In several cases, these were often complementary activities to the main purpose. After considering these exceptions, it has been suggested the creation of a fourth category for *Community* cultural infrastructure.

Whilst creating a new category from the existing ones expresses an adaptation to a specific context, it increases a certain level of subjectivity to the criteria. For this reason it was necessary to frame this category very precisely in order not to open precedents to other exceptions not as relevant. Some of the cases considered and then excluded through this criteria have been noted aside, as part of the process, to keep in further consideration whilst more cases were being processed.

### Step 3 – *Organise Categories*

*(propose)* After defining the criteria, it was then important to select what kind of information was relevant and organise it in categories and subcategories, taking in consideration how it would be accessed and used. Taking notes from the discussions, three main categories were defined to describe each infrastructure listed, and then some other more administrative. To reach the organisation of the main categories, it went from the more objective to the more subjective aspects.

The clearest of them was *Location*, defined through *Administrative Parish* and *GPS Coordinates*. The next one, still in consequence of a physical characterisation, was *Scale*. Even though a quantifiable variable, it wasn't easy to define what would be measured: first, what was relevant to measure in most cases was the size of specific spaces and facilities and not the overall building; then, most of the infrastructures would have more than one space or facility to be accounted for, which is an interesting aspect to quantify and present its diversity; finally, not all kinds of spaces and facilities are measured using the same unit, as expressing their use or quality, for what it would be impossible to sum

all of them into the same scale category. Besides all that, without direct contact with each of these infrastructure's managements, it wasn't possible to complete or verify the exact information for these items. Neither was it supposed to present a list already completed, as the idea was for the platform to allow the submission of verified information by the users.

Typology was often a category present in other lists to define the kind of program and activity of each cultural infrastructure, and it was considered as an option for this database as well. Nevertheless, it represents much more complex and subjective concepts, open to the users' interpretation and identification with a word rather than to fulfil the goal to measure the physical facilities and their activity. Defining typologies would also be an abstract imposition trying to tie up a perspective over concepts that tend to be more fluid and create different conjugations of cultural activity.

Following the database purpose, it was important to organise the blank fields so they could be autonomously and objectively filled in. It allowed for a first interpretation on the scale of Aveiro's cultural infrastructure offer. Taking that into consideration, for the *Scale* category it was proposed a physical description of their spaces: a list of the different *Kind of Spaces* available for cultural activities (*studios, multipurpose, heritage buildings, seated audiences, seating-unit rooms, archives and galleries*), ordered by scale relevance; a list of *Technical Features* from each infrastructure; the most relevant *Unit of Measurement*, in terms of *size*, for the *kind of space* (being *square meters* for *studios, multipurpose, and heritage buildings*; *seats* for audiences and seating-unit rooms; *linear meters* for *archives and galleries*), ; the *Scale Range* of the most relevant space of the infrastructure, into tripling-size breaks, proportionally distributed according to the offer available in Aveiro (*Very small* <50; *Small* 51<150; *Medium* 151<450; *Big* 451<1350; *Very Big* 1351<)<sup>9</sup>. Eventually, once the platform would be implemented, this information would be introduced in different items with precise definition of their physical dimensions. At this stage though, it has already allowed to group information and get an average distribution and characterise the current sample based on the few scale information available.

To analyse the *Program* category, there were three variables on the *kind of activity* to classify its usage. Instead of creating a single complex combination of the two alternatives for *Function* (cultural/multipurpose), *Initiative* (own/external) and *Hosting* (available/not available), it was considered that these subcategories would work autonomously for better understanding the concepts implied. As for its content, the process has shown how difficult it is to define the limits of their *Subject*, once their practises tend to cross contributions from different areas. Whilst there are several official classification of cultural sectors (*Annex A*)<sup>10</sup>, this database started from the 8 subsectors presented at Aveiro's Strategic Plan for Culture (2019) and combining those into 6: *Design, Digital Media, Heritage, Music, Performing Arts* and *Visual Arts*. Even after detecting the relevance of a seventh subsector missing (*Literature and Edition*), the subjects from some cultural infrastructure were not exactly compatible, such as the ones related to science and environment exhibition, folk and craft expressions. Reflecting on the broader content of Aveiro's cultural infrastructure, manifestations connected at least with one of the main seven subsectors have been designated as *Others*, which could then be further specified by the users once submitting that information in the platform.

If in some cases there was a clear main cultural subject addressed by the infrastructure,

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<sup>9</sup> For spaces measured by their capacity it would be considered the scale of the biggest one, for other kinds of spaces measured by area or perimeter, it would be considered the sum of all the same kind of spaces.

<sup>10</sup> UNCTAD creative economy; UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics; WIPO Core Copyrights industries, ... (UIS, 2016)

for several others it would take their managers to distinguish the main subjects from secondary ones. It was considered that for this stage it wasn't required the need to distinguish more peripheral subjects, as that could be developed during the implementation stage. Being difficult to specify an objective criteria to pin down the subject(s) of each infrastructure, all the ones which have been specifically highlighted in the information available were listed.

Finally, more administrative information, such as heritage classification, funding, jurisdiction and management was noted down and saved, whenever that specific information was available. Nevertheless, it could only be updated and completed once the platform would be up and running in order to be able to submit those details. As this information couldn't be totally completed and confirmed by then, it wasn't taken in consideration for further conclusions.

#### Step 4 - *Data format and reference*

*(propose)* Ordering and distributing the cases through a sequence of filters helped giving some hierarchy and cross information for interpretation. This would be the base to create indicators that would be more relevant for further analysis. According to the database goals, as an example, the cases were sequentially ordered in the table by its hosting availability, cultural initiative, function, cultural cycle, scale, type of main space and then administrative parish. Even though it was intended as an excel draft for the digital database, this ordering could be later edited by the users preferences if necessary.

For the map file (*Appendix D*), the colour and icon grouping scheme was supposed also to be an interactive filter choice. As an example, it was presented a scheme portraying the distribution of cultural value-chain cycle (four different colours plus a fifth colour for the combination of creation and exhibition infrastructure) with different icons depending whether available or not for hosting external cultural initiatives. These interactive supports were conceived so it could suggest the crossing of the different categories and subcategories, either by ordering or distributing the cases, respectively.

During the data gathering process each entry in the table has been hyperlinked to its information source, so it could be confirmed and updated during its creation and shared with other collaborators working on it in the future. Also, the digital location for each infrastructure has been associated to its ID, so it was possible to analyse the type of digital presence each cultural infrastructure had at the time. During the process, other notes were placed in an extra column to quickly state some other information that wasn't specified on each subcategory, but could be used for further developments, like integrating networks, partners, or more precise description on their facilities.

#### Step 5 - *Diagnose and analysis*

*(balance)* Listing a sample of over 90 cultural infrastructure cases in Aveiro allowed a representative statistic quantification and qualification. But more than summing the total of each category, it was possible to cross results between different categories. This process helped to pass from the question *what* to *how*: giving evidence on what kind of cultural activities Aveiro has a competitive advantage, which are existing and possible connections to explore and use as reference for what doesn't exist yet, and what is more peripheral or unexplored in Aveiro's cultural ecosystem that needs priority investment.

By crossing the results of one subcategory with each of all others gave an exhaustive statistic interpretation of reality. Getting lost in so much data reinforced the need to step back from the numbers and systematise the categories' main structure. That suggested some revision to the overall organisation proposed but also, after creating a database with its own indicators, it wasn't possible to establish a direct comparison with other databases

using other methodologies or from other cases periods. These statistical results could only be used to support some other analysis made on the same context. That's why *Aveiro's Strategic Plan for Culture* (2019) was taken as the base for the methodology and adopted for the presentation's narrative. In this way, the data could complete the ideas that were presented with a broader and stated knowledge.

#### Step 6 - *Applying guidelines*

*(balance)* The presentation, for both the map and the database, delivered a communication action of what would be more important to retain throughout the process, and guide a practical application of its content. As during the process of creating this database and map there was no direct contact with the client or other stakeholders for feedback, it became especially important that the results would be impacting and self-explaining. The intermediate meeting with all the team and director served as a communication test for this presentation, in order to understand the essential ideas that were being retained.

After explaining the methodology, the presentation structure followed each of the categories and subcategories defined previously. Nevertheless, it became clear that the emphasis on the three main categories needed to be highlighted. Even though charts and tables worked as illustrations for deeper interpretation, it was also important to create topics and punch lines to catch the attention for priorities. For that I've selected one value or a group of examples that would express an idea, an advantage and a need in each of the slides. Furthermore, quotes from *Aveiro Strategic Plan for Culture* were used to reinforce the diagnosis presented. In conclusion, I've selected six priority recommendations that gave an overall impression of the data collected, and also gave me a general understanding of the main results that could be interpreted from the work developed.

Since there wasn't any direct contact with the team that would process this reference for them to put it into practice (neither it was specified who would perform that role) there wasn't the opportunity to address more operative recommendations, exchange feedback, or directly pass some of the experience developed. The final format would have an autonomous interpretation over the elements presented, relying on the intermediation and interpretation of the team collaborators from *Opium* that have followed up some of the process.

### **4.3 Balance**

Starting the internship with a methodical and exhaustive data processing task was an opportunity for me to get immersed into Aveiro's cultural infrastructure through its digital channels. Even though it has mostly been an online contact, the information shared by the bidding team was determining to give me a balanced perspective between the two realities, as they had already performed some direct contact on the *focus group* for *Aveiro's Strategic Plan for Culture* (2019). This online perception shouldn't be far from what someone would get without in presence contact. That is the case of most people during 2020/2021 lockdowns. Amongst them, the international jury, who will get to know Aveiro by the information presented in the bid book, alongside to some sporadic contact with the bidding team throughout the process, or international potential stakeholders to get involved with the city's cultural activity.

The precision of the information gathered may sometimes be influenced by an online print screen of the information available at a certain moment. Even though it's not necessarily considered one dimensional information, since through digital presence it is possible to register interaction: time, location, activity and people's engagement. Even though that

perception has several limitations, it is a different field and requires different knowledge, often distant from the perception of those who are too involved with the in presence reality. Surely professionals who work close with Aveiro's cultural environment have a very broad perspective of its cultural infrastructure physical needs and advantages but the development of this database under the current circumstances also allowed to explore a perspective over its digital infrastructure; something that becomes relevant once the city can be reached from the distance of a click. For example, the lack of any activity or any kind of digital presence during such a critical moment as the imposed lockdown expressed the liveliness of the corresponding physical infrastructures, the actuality, innovation capability and sense of duty that those structures represent.

From this experience I was able to combine some knowledge to start the next stages of the internship, where I would be mostly proposing specific digital and physical intervention shaped according to Aveiro's needs. Also, it pushed me to develop organisation and criteria for managing information and to put it into practise, no matter if that would involve my participation on it or not. With this experience I've learn that implementation, even though it is my favourite stage in a project, is not necessarily part of every project I will develop in cultural management. Nevertheless, the communication elements required to pass on the information with such passion from the process are extremely important that it will influence the next chapters of that project or any other that will come. The more intermediates there are through the communication chain, the more it's lost through the process till the idea is implemented.

## 5 ACTION PLAN: *Propose a Digital and Physical Cultural Infrastructure for Aveiro*

### 5.1 Context

#### *What*

After exploring a sample of Aveiro's existing cultural infrastructure, the second part of the internship ignited a planning experience on two complementary realities for cultural activity, especially after 2020's events: to *propose a digital and a physical cultural infrastructure*. Both of these proposals follow the cultural infrastructural interventions recommended by Aveiro's Strategic Plan for Culture (2019) and the database analysis. They're also supported by the Municipal Infrastructure Map (Aveiro, Câmara Municipal, 2019.11-b) and the system of local facilities distribution.

Besides the same kind of documental and empiric sources from the previous part, it has also counted with online testimonials from other professionals undertaking the same kind of experience, and both *Opium* collaborators' and my personal academic research on the subject.

The digital tool had to work as a *mapping platform* for collaborative public use, gathering information of both cultural agents and infrastructure in Aveiro Region. Its elaboration counted with: a *report* framing the identification, analysis and needs of Aveiro's Cultural infrastructure to put the platform's purpose into context; That has justified the need to *update the presentation* developed at the end of previous part of the internship, following interaction features introduced by the platform's proposal; a *table* selecting and analysing references of cultural mapping platforms and digital cultural practises; The *guidelines* and *presentation model* to create, organise and interact on the platform;

The physical infrastructure was recommended to be a *creative hub*, combining a programme of spaces, material and immaterial heritage approach, a network of clusters and a management structure. Through the process it was developed: a *list*, mapping the cultural infrastructures and activity in Aveiro Region, adapted from Aveiro's database structure, to identify regional links; a *table* analysing the program of national and international Creative Hubs; a *report* and *organograms* compiling the programme proposal.

#### *Why*

For a cultural infrastructure to be proposed and implemented successfully by an *ECOC* bid, it was important to combine a technical analysis on specific needs and the planned collaboration of the stakeholders through the process. To reach that, the proposed digital platform intends to share and collect information, and become a regular interaction tool, providing access to public and distribute local professionals and activities through all the region and beyond it.

The purpose of the physical infrastructure is to materialise that interaction and to verify what is missing in Aveiro, becoming a pumping engine for capacity building and productivity of the existing cultural offer, and taking after the existing initiatives to transform their territory.

The purpose of this internship's stage was to propose and adapt an action plan programme to a specific context, benchmarking good practises internationally to understand the best features that could be aimed, and communicate guidelines for the implementation stage.

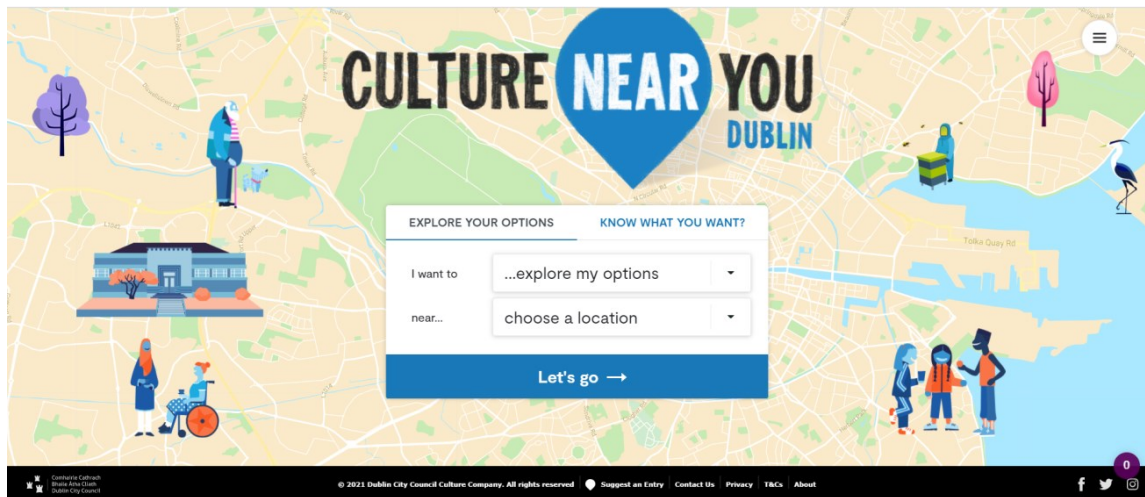


Figure 7. Culture Near You Platform (DCCCC, 2021)

This has been an opportunity to propose a project during the internship with great creative autonomy, under professional orientation. Besides testing and applying what has been analysed previously with the database, it was also a project where the balance between my academic and professional background in architecture, cultural mediation and creative industries management have been put into practice to achieve the final result.

#### *Who*

Following the implementation of *Aveiro's Strategic Plan for Culture* (2019) and the support to the *Aveiro2027* bid, the internship has continued *Opium's* collaboration in the project. Only the director, Carlos Martins, wasn't present for further debate and presentation of ideas on this part of development. An external important contribution came from the *Dublin Council Culture Company* (DCCCC, 2021) seminar, presenting how they've developed *Dublin City Cultural Audit and Map* project "Culture Near You".

#### *When*

This stage has been developed during 12 weeks, starting from November 2nd 2021 till January 29th 2021. Even though there has been an initial indication of the predicted duration of this stage, there wasn't a specific determination of all the steps through the process, as there wasn't a pre-determined format to be presented. Instead, it was open to debate and research what would be a relevant proposal format, according to the undertaken analysis. The database analysis (weeks 6 and 7) the proposal of a digital platform (weeks 8, 9 and 10) and a physical infrastructure (weeks 11 to 17, after Christmas break) were clearly split in time. Each of these stages started by looking for references, good practises and a context base, launching the proposing parts during the way. The balance stages used for preparation of graphic elements took place during the last week of each part. *Dublin City Cultural Audit and Map* seminar took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November, upon the preparation of digital platform references.

#### *Where*

This part of the internship has addressed Aveiro's regional scope, expanding it to the 11 municipalities that are part of it: Águeda, Albergaria-a-Velha, Anadia, Aveiro, Estarreja, Ílhavo, Murtosa, Oliveira do Bairro, Ovar, Sever do Vouga e Vagos. Adding to the geographical references from the first part of the internship, the case studies also had a broader scope. It was referred not only physical infrastructure, but also cultural digital spaces and practises. The cultural mapping digital platforms used as references were also the digital environments where several information was gathered: *The European Creative Hubs Network* (2021), *UNESCO's World Heritage Centre Interactive Map* (2021), *European Commission's European Year of Culture Heritage 2018 Arcgis catalogues* (Dusart *et al.*, 2019). Then, from the European networks mapped on *Urbact* interactive map (2021) it was possible to reach the mapping directories from other networks on more specific subjects, such as *European Network of Living Labs* (ENoLL, 2021), *European Network of Cultural Centres* (ENCC, 2021), *Trans Europe Halles* (2021), *ResArtis* (2021) and *Betahaus* (2021). This part of the internship has also been completely developed through remote online work practise.

#### *How*

To context the needs to be answered by the proposal, I have used Aveiro's database of cultural infrastructure, developed in the previous part. Then, following the article *2020. Cultural remediation or cultural re-mediation* (Azevedo, 2020) presented at *CITAR-UPC's*, I have gathered some examples of digital platforms for cultural mapping. Some were suggested by *Opium's* project manager (like *Dublin's Culture Near You* (DCCCC, 2021) and *Los Madriles* (Intermediae Matadero, 2018); some were proposed and

referenced in previous bid-books (like in *Bad Ischl2024*'s reference from Graz (imGrätzl Wien, 2021), *Tartu2024*'s (Tartu Linnavalitsus, n.d.) and *Chemnitz 2025*'s (Maker-space, 2020); and some other new ones, being launched during this period, like *Perform Europe*'s digital platform (IETM *et al.*, 2021)<sup>11</sup>. Crossing those references with the familiar interaction of popular websites and search engines, I proposed some guidelines for the creation of a digital mapping of cultural infrastructure.

Regarding the proposal of a physical infrastructure program with regional relevance, and supporting the research from other parts of the bid book, I broaden the scope to cultural infrastructures and activities in all Aveiro Region. As *CIRA*'s cultural information is not developed on this matter, I needed several different local and regional sources, where information was not as uniform. Most municipalities' official websites have a relevant directory of information on cultural associations, their heritage, cultural facilities and programs. Other information was found through national and regional references such as: cultural routes, associated to the region's heritage (museums, *art nouveau*, urban art, ceramics, architecture, windmills, *Bairrada*'s wine, codfish), available at regional tourism websites from *DRCC* (2021-b), *Roteiro dos Museus e Espaços Museológicos da Região Centro* (CCDRC, 2011.) and at the websites from local cultural organisations'; *Creative Entrepreneurship Incubator Networks* (PAVEI, 2014); senior universities (RUTIS, 2021); natural park classification and protection sites<sup>12</sup>. As soon as the proposal of a creative hub infrastructure in Aveiro was sustained, an analysis on members from the networks directories earlier mentioned was implemented. As for the analysis, both from national and international references, learning from the collaboration with Diana Lima (Opium) has been an opportunity to apply the research from her master thesis on *Creative Hubs in the North of Portugal* (2015).

Taking notes on advantages and elements to be developed from these references, and crossing them with the experience and analysis from Aveiros's digital touch points and cultural infrastructure offer, it was possible to create a sustained proposal for both digital and physical cultural infrastructure in Aveiro, in the context of the implementation of the *Strategic Plan for Culture* and for integration on 2027 *ECoC* bid process.

## 5.2 Propose

### Step 1- *Defining a cultural scope*

(*context*) In this stage, the aim was to go beyond an operative definition of culture infrastructure to gather and organise information. It was meant to propose a cultural infrastructure with a broader understanding of culture and its contribution, and translate it into programmatic guidelines. Expressing the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, it was important first to clarify the definition of culture implied in the proposal, opening its meaning, representing not only the classic sectors, like art and literature, but foremost “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group” that also includes “lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs” (UNESCO, 2001).

### Step 2 – *Description, analysis and needs to frame a proposal on a physical infrastructure*

(*context*) Before proposing a plan for a physical cultural infrastructure, there was the need to create a report documenting the process of identification, analysis and definition of needs and priorities, based on the sample collected by the database of Aveiro's cultural

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<sup>11</sup> Online presentation on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

<sup>12</sup> *Plano Setorial da Rede Natura 2020* (ICNF, 2021) and the Protected Areas National Network Map (ICNF, n.d.)

infrastructure. During this stage there was an update to the methodology that required a review of the database presentation. Instead of focusing on the three main categories (*Location, Scale and Program*), the analysis was presented using two perspectives: according to the Cycle of Cultural Activity (*Creation/Exhibition/Artistic Education and training/Community*), and to the kind of spaces (*studios, multipurpose, heritage buildings, seated audiences, seating-unit rooms, archives and galleries*). The location analysis was mentioned, although it would be mostly portrayed by the map document. Then, each of these categories were analysed via the subcategories presented before in the database.

These adaptations were made in order for the analysis and recommendations to be operatively applied to the proposal of a specific physical infrastructure, and not only to work as a base for a digital platform for cultural mapping.

This report clarified a glossary on the terms used to describe each category and their option. The analysis was then focused on the 11<sup>th</sup> strategic goal from *Aveiro's Strategic Plan for Culture* (2019), enhancing the need of an infrastructure dedicated to creation (*Annex B*). Through that analysis and the goals of *ECoC* infrastructural intervention, the threats and opportunities defined the needs and presented some recommendations based on the territorial analysis from the database stage.

### **5.2.1 *Propose a Digital Infrastructure for Cultural Mapping***

#### *Step 3.1 - References and interaction from other digital platforms*

*(context)* From the selection of different digital platforms for cultural mapping and interaction, I have developed a table detailing the advantages they proposed and suggestions on different approaches that could be adapted to Aveiro's context. Listing and analysing different themes, purposes, audiences, geographical scopes, promoters, formats and trends, I was able to learn from their experience and the evolving approach to the subject, already taking in consideration the experience from 2020/21 impacts into a further reach. It also helped to make all those questions of how to present a digital platform and to envision other contents and categories, so it would be possible to organise and compile more options into a coherent characterisation. That would allow me to depict Aveiro beyond the existing sample, including new and innovative cultural formats that could be introduced by the users, and still be framed under the same structure of contents.

#### *Step 4.1 Define users, actions, sequence of digital interaction steps and information content.*

*(propose)* Cultural mediation in presence, according to my own professional experience, relies mostly in the quick ability to observe spontaneous reactions and adapt the contents to it. Even though digital mediation also counts on algorithmic abilities to adapt to specific user interaction preferences, it requires a detailed structure of steps planned in advance. For this reason, it is extremely important to clarify what can be the users' profile, the actions intended by them, and the message each step wants to express.

To understand the users profile, it was developed a list of different categories of possible users, the role they would play on the platform's interaction, the actions they would be willing to promote (offer) or use (demand), what kind of elements would they be referring to, what would be the platform's goal they'd be fulfilling, and what kind of mediation actions would involve them with the platforms usage. These subjects have been organised in a table, so that the interaction of the users could be described by the *5 w's and 1h* method referenced in the methodology chapter.

After describing the possible interaction and expectations, it was sorted out the contact steps from each user reaching the platform, defining the correspondence between the following items: the digital action, the visualization options and the meaning underneath each option. This organisation of information allowed the understanding on how both the presentation and the submission would be displayed, which and how it could work as browsing filters, and what kind of results could be measured.

Finally, it was suggested a fill in form containing some information to be displayed and some other to be used for back-office data analysis and for users' filters interaction. Besides the options integrated in each category, the cultural agents and infrastructure mentioned in each page would work as keywords for a personal page. In this way, the links between them could be easily accessed, as well as expressing their connections.

#### Step 5.1 - *Develop a Model - presentation*

*(balance)* To communicate the idea in a way that could be appealing for further consideration during the implementation process by the *Opium's* team, municipal representatives and web developers, I was asked to work on a presentation that could show both the purpose and the interaction visualisation. Upon the debate of this format, it was made reference to the traditional *Yellow Pages* book, as the traditional physical compilation of a database, to fulfil the purpose of displaying simple options and listing information. Taking that well known visual, I've developed a presentation that would associate the explanation of the digital interaction through suggestive button-like text boxes, as the options that would be displayed upon the different tab/title options (*Appendix E*).

Using only *3W's and 2h* presentation, I have connected: *what?* to explain the possible actions (to register/to explore/to research) giving the options of the different kind of elements catalogued (cultural spaces and agents); *who?* to present the users (professionals/public) with their different backgrounds, showing the options of the possible roles they perform; *where?* referring to the goals of accessibility and dissemination of the platform as a communication tool, establishing the goals and advantages it aimed; *how much?* (scale/kind of spaces) showing the advantages and goals of the platform as a measuring tool; *how?* summarised the different categories that organise the information, presenting it as a managing tool. Then it was given an example on how some of the actions would be visualised and what kind of written and graphic information would follow, in order to be understood as an analysis tool of the territory's cultural offer and demand.

In conclusion, as there hasn't been direct interaction with any of the elements that would put this tool into practise, it was suggested a list of collaboration needs to achieve this result, in terms of format requests, operative, technologic and institutional partners.

#### 5.2.2. Propose a Physical Infrastructure for Cultural Creation

##### Step 3.2 - *Identifying Aveiro Region's cultural infrastructure and activity*

*(context)* To propose a cultural infrastructure that reflected not only the needs from Aveiro municipality but the cultural dynamic from the whole region, I was asked to broaden some references of cultural infrastructure and programming projects developed also in the other ten municipalities. Starting from the 90 cultural infrastructure listed in the previous database developed, I was asked to develop a slightly different criteria. The total elements gathered should represent cultural infrastructure typologies, material, immaterial and natural heritage places (classified, under classification, or integrating cultural routes). The

aim was to identify different kind of values associated to local heritage, and how they're translated into networks, routs and cultural subjects that gather the whole region.

Besides the municipalities' asymmetries, it was important to realise the complementary system they proposed between each other, the distribution of common subjects and the operating networks and organisations that group their activity. Nevertheless, it was missing how they already interact with each other, which could lead to a deeper analysis on the matter. Other aspect on focus was the artistic education offer in the region: which areas, and what kind of infrastructure they develop. This has reinforced that even though Aveiro is the municipality with the biggest percentage of cultural infrastructure and built heritage in the region, it deeply relies on the support of the other municipalities' cultural offer and development to achieve some diversity.

To take notes on references from the region's cultural activity, it was listed a series of programmes, events and cultural agents in another table. Even though it didn't aim to create a complete list of all the agents and activities present in the region, it was useful to identify their formats, practises, cultural sectors and subjects, target audience, geographical reach and location, expertise, scope, hosting/promoting infrastructure and partner entities, and take notes on what are the kind of activities that need further development and connections.

#### Step 4.2 - *References and analysis on cultural infrastructure programmes*

*(context)* The information gathered on references of cultural infrastructure for artistic creation reinforced the importance of international networks that make their impact expand and reach much further than the geographical location of a specific building. The networks that creative hubs integrate not only exchange and learn from other members' experience, but also they work as directories where it's improved access to their sectors' activity, their services and facilities, as they are often represented.

Through these sources, it was possible to list and analyse the combination of options in other creative hubs and interpret the different typological aims and dynamics. Also, it allowed to relate this information to infrastructures and initiatives located in previous *ECoC* bidding processes.

Comparing with the analysis made by Diana Lima (2015) on references from the *North of Portugal's Creative Hubs*, it was possible to base a proposal on a program for a creative hub for Aveiro that could be both innovative, integrating and reflecting the needs and advantages from the region, and establish dynamics and a management plan that would connect this building to Aveiro and to Europe.

#### Step 5.2 - *Propose a program for a creative infrastructure in Aveiro*

*(propose)* To propose a cultural infrastructural programme, I compiled all the information gathered in a report, orienting its integration for an *ECoC* bid book.

- First, it presented a synthesis on Aveiro's needs, identifying the main conclusions from indicators, analysis and results from previous context analysis, in order to formulate precise problems to be addressed;
- Then, it was defined an approach to an infrastructural intervention, taking in consideration the specified needs for Aveiro's context and the *ECoC* bidding recommendations. Each of the four cultural cycles of activity were addressed: *creation, exhibition, community* and *artistic education and training*. For the first two it was described the kind of infrastructure, based on some of the database categories: quantification, type of spaces, cultural sectors, geographical distribution, the

alternation between different scales, the connection with local heritage values, the articulation between the different spaces, existing sectors and cultural agents in the region's territory.

- Following, it was exemplified some possible materialisation of that concept as a picture of what it could represent, taking from existing infrastructure and the integration of possible local networks. Then, it was also described the need it would fulfil and how it would be addressed. That included improvement recommendations for: creation productivity and qualification of cultural agents; usage and exchange of space; reactivation and intervention on build and immaterial heritage; integration of natural landscape; mobility and sustainable access; digital integration and supporting services (management, communication); the approach to each cultural sector and their cross-sector interactions with local economic activities and research; public participation strategies; life quality and territory appeal; local to global network cooperation programs. For the other two cultural activity cycles, it was mentioned some guidelines, mostly regarding the improvements on their cultural activity and facilities qualification, since in terms of infrastructure it was already diagnosed a wide offer distributed through the region.
- After, there was a selection and explanation of cultural infrastructural approaches from other *ECoC* bid books, as guidelines of what was expected to be mentioned on this infrastructural proposal. Between them, it has been listed elements such as the infrastructural program, services and activities, organograms, involved stakeholders, cross-sector partnerships, connections and usage from the bid's cultural programming, the infrastructure's mediation approach, the state of development and the estimated chronogram and budget distribution (*Annex C*).
- It was made a selection of recommended networks, at international, national, and inter-municipal level, and explained their relevance. From that, and taking the example of a selection of other cultural infrastructure references, it was specified how a creative hub infrastructure in Aveiro could perform a complementary and relevant offer to Portugal's cultural scene and be locally distributed through the region's territory.
- Gathering that knowledge, it was formulated an infrastructural format defining a creative purpose connected with the local communities, economic activities, heritage and everyday life. Two parts of the infrastructure were distinguished, developing different roles and scales of intervention. In each of them, it was specified the outcomes for two different target audiences: creative professionals and community & visitors. It was described the connection between each different elements, the dynamics and participation of existing stakeholders, and the change proposed for each cultural activity cycle, measured by Charles Landry parameters on *Urban Creative Cycle* – *Annex D* (Lima, 2015:50).
- From that, it was defined the operative program, distinguishing the two different scale parts of the infrastructure as the combination of a multi-subject Creative Hub and the several Sectorial Clusters distributed through different localities. It was described the following: the specific connection to local heritage and kind of intervention; the location, urban integration and connection with other kinds of infrastructure and landscape (transports, university, business, commercial, residential and public space);

the scale and quantification of each space and their function, staff and public hosting capacity; the program, defining departments and their services, users access and specific spatial conditions, typologies, areas and measurements; the contributions to each cultural sector; the team's size and their roles; the management structure, suggesting involved stakeholders and long-term strategy.

- Finally, it was presented the schedule for the plan's implementation taking in consideration both the digital and physical infrastructure; that included the different participation steps through the process, in order for the local community, public decision-makers and local and global stakeholders to be aware and involved through the identification of needs, strategy definition, calls, applications, selection processes, building interventions, regulatory and evaluation processes, long-term gradual cooperation and renovation plans.

### Step 5.3 *Guidelines communication*

*(balance)* Once the Program and implementation has been discussed, it was felt the need to translate it into graphical elements to communicate the guidelines structure. Even though it ended up not being presented and discussed with all the team as the process' conclusion, the organograms created were integrated in the report as illustrations of what had been described (*Appendix F, G, H and I*).

Even though there was a direct connection to the scale and distribution of each area from the infrastructure, it was important to keep an abstract representation of ideas, so not to be confused or too suggestive of an actual plan. The importance of these graphic elements was the organisation of textual information associated. It gave structure to precise details while suggesting their dynamics, grouping subjects and guiding axis between them. In this way, the structure proposed for this programme would influence the interpretation of future readers and possible implementers of the plan. As the implementation of action for the bidding process was being delayed due to *COVID-19* restrictions, the analysis and debate of the proposal hasn't been defined, and for that, the balancing stage of the proposal went missing a final review which precipitated my collaboration in other projects from the company.

### **5.3 Balance**

Passing from the collection of data and references to the analysis and development of an operative and creative tool became a very challenging and grateful experience, expressing both a statement and guidelines for cultural infrastructure approaches. It has been an opportunity to apply the skills developed from the previous part of the internship – criteria, coherence and focused analysis – into a creative experience in cultural management.

Combining local and global references, this contribution is custom made to a specific context, aiming to transform the reality not only through the physical territory but also through digital formats. It proposes an intervention that goes beyond immediate needs and problems but assumes a long term strategic approach once it is balanced with shared values from the European community policies and the region's resources. This planning process exemplifies how *ECoC* bids changes how cities and their regions are thought and transformed towards a diverse and connected identity.

When lines, sections and plans used to give shape to my ideas of and for space, this proposal made me use my projecting skills to design sustained guidelines and express the

structure of a project to build new formats of public space.

This proposal is focused on the discussion of cultural strategy and its transformation ability through the interaction proposed rather than the architectural or design object. It hopes to influence a change on the way people from Aveiro Region participate and create, releasing them from the traditional containers that often confused the format with function by how it looks. In a personal level, it has shown me how architectural project thinking can be integrated in the creation of a digital platform, with a concept and structure, so that it is able to host possible interactions that people will perform or interpret.

Even though the process would benefit from the participation and discussion between other team members, cultural agents and beneficiaries involved, the graphic representations leave the discussion open to the subjects they intend to express. Conscious of the opportunity to explore my creative autonomy, the proposal avoids confining my single perspective into strict lines: it rather suggests guiding axis on what has been considered the priorities.

It is still desirable that in a near future it can proceed to a collaborative design process. Meanwhile, time constraints may remove the project's relevance and impact. On one side, postponing the proposal's debate will require an update on the analysis and less time for a participatory process before it is integrated on the bid book. On the other side, having developed and documented this proposal essentially through online work and digital files, it doesn't create a lasting shared memory or awareness of the ideas suggested. It risks being easily missed, the same way digital presence can often go under the radar. For that not to happen, it would require the archive of the files right away once they have been submitted to a folder where the development process had already been organised. However, without a live and intense discussion, it can be difficult to interpret later on or to have an awareness of its operative use and inspiration when implementing the ideas. This is one of the questions raised by online work practises and the use of digital archives as well as their possible functions.

This practise experience has reinforced the urge to invest in a transversal intervention on digital access to culture. The international accessed sources revealed several directories and interaction formats where Portuguese cultural infrastructures aren't referenced yet. Neither in Portugal was it found similar mapping platforms, as cultural infrastructure digital access is mostly dependent on diffuse local administration and governmental information for other purposes rather than a practical use of the infrastructural facilities.

Sharing know-how and experience from cultural infrastructure, networks and professional agents from other locations has been one of the biggest advantages during this practise. But the pressure to be constantly participating in online meetings and taking the most opportunities to work with people that wouldn't be available if the meetings were in presence, had its consequences. In opposition, that made it more difficult to schedule the availability to collaborate with the closest team and possible partners.

This shows how these channels may still be quite overwhelming tools on the current integration of cultural management practises. Even though they aim to include new contacts to the existing references, it might be needed new integration and interaction tools for the ones who are still getting into the subject. Otherwise, the differences between different levels of experience will increase. The challenges are quickly being raised on online working practises, and this part of the internship has been a combination of both proposing and experimenting new channels for cultural work practises.

## 6 CONSIDERATIONS ON THE DIGITAL APPROACH EXPERIENCE:

### *From Aveiro2027 ECoC Bid and Opium's practise to other Cultural Management Projects.*

#### 6.1 Context

*What were the elements that I have applied in the next project from the experience learned?*

As considered on my internship's plan, by the end of my collaboration for the implementation of Aveiro's *Strategic Plan for Culture* and the preparation for Aveiro2027 ECoC bid process, I was asked to integrate Opium's team in a different cultural management project, from February the 1<sup>st</sup> till the end of my internship on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021. It consisted in a *consulting project* for a cultural and creative market research, an *action plan* for capacity building, and a *promotion showcase* of cultural and creative businesses from a Portuguese network of entrepreneurship incubators.

My collaboration has followed the first part of the project, focusing on the context stage of the project. It included the state of the art on the transformation of cultural and creative market over the impact of *COVID-19* pandemics and a sectorial analysis of statistics, trend forecast, challenges and opportunities, good practises, international markets and national creative talents. All these elements should take in consideration a gradual scope from global to regional scale.

From the previous learning and experience process, and inside this context stage, I identified once again two parts that I was able to participate in the context framing and propose information for it.

The *context part* counted with:

- Confirmation of the *schedule* and *priorities* of the different phases of development and presentation;
- Creation of a *database* portraying the target audience of cultural and creative businesses from the different incubators to frame the purpose of the project's proposal.
- Definition of *parameters* and *selection criteria*, based on how the final product would address them.
- Organisation of a concept for grouping the different companies into *categories* of sectorial scopes, location distribution and geographical realm, management organisation, kind of activity and network size;

The *format*, *diagnose* and *application* of this information hasn't been developed by me as in this case other members of the team took on a series of interviews and contacted, through online meetings, some of the case studies' representatives regarding the process. In this situation, they have developed the balance part of this database result.

On the *proposing part*, there was:

- Definition of Cultural and creative market *scope*;
- Description of *analysis* and *needs* of the undergoing market transformations, at different geographic realms.
- Collection of *references* and *sources*. This case demanded a confrontation of the data developed by the different sources' criteria, so the statistic information wouldn't compromise the narrative.

- Define the *scope* of each targeted *cultural sector*, and what kind of indicators would be comparable through different areas.
- Create a *graphic representation* that would compile synthetically the information, in order for the communication to follow during the implementation of the action plan to be both expressive and operative. In this case, it was developed a prototype on how the information should be presented, to then be replicated by *Opium*'s Team during the course of their work following the end of my internship.

***Where was the geographical scope of the project?***

Having their cultural managing and consulting team working in direct contact with a client that is also the beneficiary of the project's implementation gives *Opium* a privileged contact and understanding of a specific and neighbouring reality, the same way Carlos Martins stated for Aveiro's project on the interview (*Appendix B*). The client, a regional network from the north of Portugal, intended to develop a shared path for cultural and creative business activity gathering both *Norte* and *Centro* regions. Their approach reflected an awareness for the need to join the advantages from a wider region in order to be more competitive, and establish cooperation beyond their individual reach. That is a perspective I haven't personally experienced during my collaboration with Aveiro's strategic plan as a regional bid. No other stakeholders outside Aveiro's municipality have been mentioned or addressed their concerns during a process that aimed to represent the whole region.

***Why was it relevant?***

My contribution for *Aveiro2027* bid book process has been reflected by how I understood this new cultural project as an operative tool for young and growing cultural and creative businesses to be updated with global development trajectories, getting awareness from local resources and challenges. In this case, there was the advantage of having feedback from more precise and reachable beneficiaries of the process. Without the previous experience, it is likely that the proposals would be mostly addressing a particular reality or occasional request based on the beneficiaries demand. Instead, the result aimed for an overall understanding of the group, their subgroups existing dynamics and reinforcement of shared goals, to position themselves in order to connect with wider horizons and global integration.

***Who were the new stakeholders?***

Even though during my collaboration the different agents' interaction and participation on the implementation of the action plan hasn't been developed by me, in this project the context analysis already included with their participation. This process has taken advantage from the integration of online meetings and how they are important in each part of the process, from context to proposing and balancing. I have also had the opportunity to participate in a meeting with the client for an intermediate state of development of the action plan proposal. With the participation of all the incubators' beneficiary representatives, I was also able to understand the level of awareness of the public and their expectations, as this personal contact allowed me to observe and register notes on their concerns and interaction.

In result, the project raised expectation and engagement with its public towards the final product. As the user was also the client, this close connection came from a natural compromise. But once the client's purpose is to engage a different public and develop a sense of community around the project, it requires extra work on the mediation of the final users with the process.

### ***When did it take place?***

Taking in consideration that this new project was promoted by a private client (differently from Aveiro, promoted by the municipality), the connection with a client and beneficiaries with a higher degree of self-determination meant a different schedule compromise. This resulted in frequent work plan changes both on the request and on the timings, which made it more difficult to balance the schedule. On another level, the pressure with deadlines would come from the client's demand, and not by the schedule plan proposed by the team for an application of a public program.

As a project for a smaller period and tight budget, the productivity levels were also another element to take into stricter consideration. This would be particularly demanding to manage as more changes of direction were expected through the process, resulting on constant balances of progress and new ideas upon discussion of preliminary results. For this reason, the previous experience in a long term project allowed a wider period for creativity and interpretation, making the execution quicker and pointing to a more stable target.

### ***How were tools and sources adapted?***

In the process of that last consulting project in market research it was especially interesting to count with *Opium's* administrative in-charge, Catarina Braga. Not only for the time management and quick framing and distribution of tasks and sources, but also for working side by side with someone from a different sector background (economics) on the same tasks, processing information and converting it into a report; it was a productive experience on management, teamwork and online working practise. Using collaborative files and sharing a personal *dropbox* has led to better synchronisation, live creating and editing experience, resulting in a four hands written document, combining knowledge from a specialised field and receptivity from an area known from regular working contact. The respect to a different sensitivity to the subjects ended up adding to a learning experience. Each of us has added from our professional previous experiences and giving each other access to different information sources, different interpretations and feeling useful and engaged with the tasks on a personal level. This has been one of the aspects enhanced by Carlos Martins from *Opium's* practise that I can now take into my professional experience and follow that legacy for other cultural management projects.

## **6.2 Propose**

From my experience at *Opium's* practise and my contribution for *Aveiro2027's* *ECOC* bid process, I'd like to highlight some considerations on what could be more relevant and operative for future related professional experiences, taking in consideration the innovation brought by digital integration into working practises and cultural products.

### ***It is to be done with the people of today, not an ideal tomorrow***

The possibility to integrate the participation of different players in each of the steps of cultural processes – from their professional background and working experience to beneficiaries from cross-sectorial stakeholders, partners and audiences – commits the implementation with its results (Dâmaso, 2019). Online widespread and reinforced interaction can perform an advantage in terms of access. However, online working practises may pass by as invisible or inconsequent for a shared interest, and be only an asset for the ones who participated on it. That would keep cultural managers from

fulfilling their purpose to widespread influence economic activities, public institutions and services. For that reason, it is important to keep a register of that activity, promote access and interaction, and have consequent actions and in presence touch points from it, reachable to public awareness (Cui, Vavoula, 2021).

Constrains, such as the ones brought by *COVID-19* pandemics, may challenge the process, but an especially sensitive area that wants to widespread innovation has to lead a quick and confident response to events. Even though that has been the message behind *Aveiro2027 ECoC* bid communication campaign, it needed to be implemented by matter-of-fact evidence of cultural practises, adapting to the most recent context transformations. Missing that timing reinforced culture as having a non-essential role to everyday life, once it should have materialised how culture can't be postponed only for when convenient or favourable.

In what was at *Opium's* reach, the formats proposed for digital and physical infrastructure combined this hybrid and participatory process of implementation, opening questions to define a future trajectory and not just addressing immediate solutions. Nevertheless, the success of this implementation depends on how the vision and awareness is shared between the developing team and the political promoter. As Carlos Martins expressed (*Annex B*), *Opium's* interest to develop Aveiro's bid didn't necessarily have to do with winning the title, as it all started by establishing a long term cultural strategy plan that would benefit future opportunities to work in Aveiro. However, in practise, that is a slow and hardworking process, difficult to show measurable results right on the first steps, particularly when coinciding with other political timings and urges.

### *The integration of digital mediation isn't a need, unless it is considered strategic*

Through the internship's working practise, online sources have made it possible to contextualize, propose and balance new projects. But that has been particularly challenging due to several outdated and fragmented information and existence. This experience raised the need to manage the digital footprint of lost content and misleading information, as well as creating new aggregating platforms that reflect existing and possible connections from cultural activity.

By using social media to check existing recent activity, I realised that currently digital interaction from cultural agents' evidence the dynamism and relevance of their activity. In most of the cases registered in Aveiro, even though they didn't have a digital or physical website or platform, social media webpages existed as a way to be closer to their public (or followers). This indicated that by simply existing doesn't make digital access any useful. It needs to make cultural agents represented through how they propose audiences to interact and participate with them. This involves either a communication strategy or the development of personalised digital touch points: operative, entertaining, informative... That is mostly about how people reach them, making them already feel engaged and aligned with their offer, rather than the subject itself. Besides that, it should have specific purpose and goals, to know what it wants to measure for improving their efficiency and register the transformations from their impact.

The different kind of access and distribution of cultural contents and how people take part on them allow digital content mediation particularly relevant to shape physical territory. That can be explored as an important tool to for governmental administration, cultural offer and artistic creation to reach more peripheral regions. Digital integration can then be particularly relevant for more isolated places, and currently having eleven cities bidding for *2027 ECoC* in Portugal should be an opportunity to stand out innovative

mediation strategies compared to the more standard formats present at urban central areas, where there is more offer of physical infrastructure.

### *Online working practise implies closer attention to human contact*

The online work experience from my internship has been motivated by constraints resulting from *COVID-19* pandemic context. Being a sudden change of working practise, it has made remote work mainstream, but hasn't properly developed all the benefits of online work. Whilst it brought self-management development, a skill particularly useful for cultural management professionals, it didn't bring flexibility, as it wasn't possible to choose or alternate with in presence contact to learn by observing, exchanging experiences and connect with other professional's work.

Despite the limitations, *Opium's* attention to integration made the difference to overtake them. When possible, it was firstly adopted the alternation between in presence and online work, which allowed the presentation and project discussion meeting at the office, a guided tour to an event managed in Aveiro, and recommended access to online events connected with their work in the city. Despite the overloaded online meeting schedule from each collaborator, it was particularly important and productive the availability for a direct call to clarify and discuss feedback on personal integration and on my collaboration. Even though this hasn't been planned, to improve the efficiency and team integration for online working practise, it is necessary to give extra importance to the human side of the business, alternating from digital and physical interaction.

Besides, online work has raised the opportunity for teams (especially small ones such as more common in cultural management companies such as *Opium*) to exchange collaborations with professionals from different locations, experience and sectors, improving the team's diversity and know-how. This access might be easier between peers, but ideally it could influence more fluid cross-sectorial collaborations in other economic activities, and increasing the demand for innovative online work environments, supported by cultural management research.

### *Questioning: Operative communication for intangible products*

From the beginning of this professional experience in cultural management, I was asked what to develop but I wasn't told how I should do it. Working with professionals from different backgrounds required me to observe and adapt to each case, while keeping some coherence on communication. I started to take notes, and soon I was asking why I did take them. For that reason, I then evolved to make questions instead, and organise them so I understood why a particular information was relevant. Questions are also what people have in mind once something is proposed. In that way, I found that presenting a proposal through making questions could be more effective and inclusive for the receptor than presenting answers for unclear purposes. This approach may come from my cultural mediation professional background, where I assume I don't need to know everything around me to be entitled to ask and open a debate, managing different sensibilities and sharing responsibility through the answers (Rancière, 1991)<sup>13</sup>.

As projects in cultural management don't necessarily comprise the stage of their implementation, it is important that they are perceived as operative and clearly targeted

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<sup>13</sup> Rancière, under the character of *professeur Jacotot*, proposes a format of universal self-learning, the teacher is asked not to explain but to teach what they don't know, following the student's process and questioning what they know on the subject. The improvisation is something that opens themselves to the unpredicted and to discover, instead of assuming the answer is obvious for who hasn't question in themselves.

by who will analyse them later. For that reason, the most objective way I found to put it was through ordering the questions that might come, answering them in the most precise way possible, for at least that not to be missed. In the projects I developed at *Opium*, this ordering was proposed to be related to the different stages of the process, so it follows it from thinking to the execution of the idea; in that way it seems more understandable what is required for making it happening. After all, culture is expected to raise questions, so what could be a more opportune subject than to question the role of digital integration on the development of future interactions?

### 6.3 *Balance*

After sharing my perspective over the digital working practises and cultural interaction products, I find the need to open some room for debate. Several questions come to my mind: What will be the possible challenges ahead? Why will that be a future opportunity to take in consideration? Who will benefit the most from that? When will there be signs of change? Where will the impact take place for change? How different do the current approaches need to change? I don't intend to answer these questions but instead to share future subjects of research. Thus, by making this report not the end of an experience but the beginning of something, I intend it to last and find application to further professional experiences.

Without any doubt, the pandemic constrains pushed forward a series of needs and ongoing developments of digital innovation. Such a striking event should inspire research on the impacts it made on society and the forecast and development of new business opportunities. (Travkina *et al.*, 2020). It's important not to forget that all the change hasn't been fully thought or planned, and needs to be improved to become fare and long lasting. For that to have a positive outcome and integrate the potential of change introduced, public debate becomes even more relevant. In that way it will be taking into account and balance different perspectives regarding the event, summarizing the learning process, and suggesting operative guidelines to successfully apply and evolve specific working and cultural practises. Following the experience on my infrastructural proposal at *Opium's*, one of these guidelines should definitely address the fact that even guidelines themselves need to consider the unconsidered, and offer flexible and frequently adaptable formats.

In the same way, for innovation to be efficiently implemented it has to be followed by other kind of balance: regulation. During the internship's projects I had to propose some rules for criteria, categories and indicators to be possible to evaluate the implementation results. If there is no development on legislation framing online working practises, copyright, data protection, all the innovation introduced leads to a series of abusive practises, illicit exploitation and misappropriation, to name a few. That is what puts the x in cross-sectorial for innovation: it requests the politicians to legislate, cultural management to mediate the agenda of change into public interest, the educational system to spread it, business activities to give feedback and data....

The benefits from the success of these transformations should be particularly felt by the cultural sector (Travkina *et al.*, 2020), like cultural managers who lead the promotion of debate, experimentation and implementation of innovative formats for thinking cultural practises and products. But besides them, it will also improve the participation and measuring skills of cultural stakeholders; the artists and creative industries' practises and business' formats; the public's access interaction and engagement on cultural activities and civic participation.

Even though digital integration has had international impact, as a consequence of *COVID-*

19 pandemics, it has exposed the territorial inequalities to its access (Travkina *et al.*, 2020). That has also intensified specific local needs and approaches to online practises and digital touch points for social integration. Being Portugal in a peripheral location in Europe, it demands extra investment to keep track of its fellow European cultural reality. On a global perspective though, it represents a central position, an interesting point for crossing references from other continents, as it has performed throughout history.

To reinforce Portuguese integration within European values, it is important for national base cultural projects not only to think ahead through long term projects, but also to overcome its small scale drawback for international competitiveness. This geographical context reinforces the role of cultural management practises, such as the one experienced in *Opium*, not only to connect abroad but inter-regionally. And that is what gives *Opium* an enhanced position in its market, and opens opportunities for others to get in the business. At the current time of events, with digital integration channels overtaking administrative borders, it seems especially favourable to establish digital connections that expand their territorial impact.

During the process of writing this report, change was registered once working practises found the time to finish the balance of each step: by registering, organising and communicating the results achieved, and not falling into the pressure of constantly giving answers to the following demands. From this internship experience, the balance stage, with all the players involved, needs to be scheduled, respected and charged as part of the project, for the cultural management business to foster commitment with implementation.

As soon as remote access has been improved by online work, it's now one of my main concerns to claim back the time it has taken overscheduling online meetings in order to create long lasting memory of the projects developed.

## 7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the main result from writing this report lies my interpretation on the chance of a city to win the *ECoC* title which depends, mostly, on its bid book's capacity to express the learning process undertaken from the everyday constant changes. It's not just about the best answer it proposes, or to have developed the right practices for its context. The differentiating quality relies on how strategically the bid questions its resources: showing an ability to take action and proposing answers adapted to the presented and analyzed context, aware of the constant ongoing transformations.

Both the bid book and the report end up being a process of reflection and awareness: the bid book on the city's ability to find the best resources from its community to constantly answer everyday challenges and to grow confidence towards the future; the internship report addressing my professional path, on how I put in practice my skills and apply them for new challenges.

Till 2020, for an *ECoC* bid there was an expectation to give the most interesting answer to each problem. But with the pandemics impact, we realized that more important than a well-defined instructions' guide-plan, it all relied on embracing what distinguishes our way of solving problems, work to overcome them and implement what has been considered a priority.

The bid book works precisely to affirm a certain way of thinking and creating culture. This internship allowed me to confront myself with a personal way of making things. Not so much for what has been concluded, always depending on external changes, either from client's and team's decisions, resources limitations, time or location when and where it happened. It's not always possible to reach the end, to implement an idea, to win a title or get a position. But we only really move forward once giving the time for balance it all. Precisely in 2020, to contribute for a project such as an *ECoC* bid has reinforced the conviction that the knowledge and experience I've acquired gather a personal professional approach. And that is also present through the collection of projects I got involved with, and not necessarily on how the final result turned out.

Digital integration has been an area to which I've lean against the wind for a while, as it wouldn't allow me to express as confident and spontaneous as in my "in presence" way of developing projects. To face that and to overcoming it has been a personal experience. I have internalized its instrumental nature, specially transversal and strategic on the current context, and made it work into my advantage: planning its purpose to have a cultural message for thinking and gathering both virtual, physical and social realities. With increasing new alternatives, I stand for finally being able to make choices and combinations of both physical and digital practices as a prevailing professional approach. To put in practice previous experiences and to challenge myself with what is yet unknown I aim to create long term horizons.

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## APPENDIX A

### Internship's Chronogram (2021.03.05)

	Date																									
	21.09.2020	28.09.2020	12.10.2020	19.10.2020	26.10.2020	02.11.2020	09.11.2020	16.11.2020	23.11.2020	30.11.2020	07.12.2020	14.12.2020	21.12.2020	04.01.2021	11.01.2021	18.01.2021	25.01.2021	01.02.2021	08.02.2021	15.02.2021	22.02.2021	01.03.2021	08.03.2021	15.03.2021	19.03.2021	
Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
<b>1. Database</b>																										
List Aveiro's Cultural Infrastructure ; Mapping Cultural Infrastructure; Analysis and Presentation																										
<b>2. Action Plan</b>																										
2.1 Report and Presentation on the digital mapping platform of Aveiro's Cultural Infrastructure ;																										
2.2. Report and Presentation of the Programme for Aveiro Physical Cultural Infrastructure;																										
2.3. Report and stage planning of the action plan implementation;																										
<b>3 Other Project(s)</b>																										
Applying the methodology to other projects;																										
																										Final estágio

## APPENDIX B

### *Interview to Carlos Martins (C.M.), Opium's director. (2021.04.02)*

by Tiago Azevedo (T.A)

**(TA) Numa perspetiva mais abrangente sobre o mercado da gestão de projetos culturais, a Opium tem noção de onde existe maior requisito destes serviços a nível nacional e europeu? Será possível perceber se essa maior necessidade a nível internacional é aquela que se regista em Portugal e no caso particular da Opium?**

(C.M.) Sim, acho que no nosso caso, a empresa foi criada em Junho de 2006, e nós observamos uma evolução do assunto. Ou seja, não há uma única abordagem ao tema, sentimos que houve uma evolução. No início a oportunidade que nos surgiu teve que ver, acima de tudo, com o começar a haver em Portugal a ideia que a relação entre cultura e economia podia ser perspetivada de forma diferente. Isto porque era uma política Europeia: o tema da economia criativa começou a sê-lo em 2006/08, e em Portugal também, dentro desse quadro comunitário 2007/2014. Notámos que existia em Portugal uma oportunidade de ocupar esse espaço para ter um pensamento que ao mesmo tempo fosse sobre os processos culturais e se relacionasse com a dimensão económica: os agentes culturais eram muito focados na produção artística, ou na gestão de equipamentos, ou na salvaguarda do património, e havia muito pouca relação com este universo, este triângulo entre território, economia e cultura que tentamos ocupar. Não por uma visão estratégica, mas porque tivemos convites, tivemos encomendas que nos levaram a traçar esse caminho. Essa foi a nossa primeira abordagem. Sentimos que com o tempo essa questão da gestão cultural começou a ter uma visão mais profissionalizante, porque não havia tanto essa figura no nosso mercado. Desde logo porque foram contruídos muitos equipamentos públicos, nomeadamente pelas autarquias. Numa primeira fase eram muito mais numa perspetiva de leitura pública, ou proteção de património, mais relacionado com bibliotecas e museus. E aí havia uma carreira profissional técnica que ocupava esse universo (os bibliotecários, diretores de museus). Depois começaram a abrir outro tipo de equipamentos: espaços de teatro, zonas mais de formação artística, incubadoras de empresas na área criativa, e havia, de facto, outro tipo de competências que era preciso trazer e que não estavam no mercado, e começou a haver algum tipo de oferta a esse nível. Portanto, a questão da gestão da cultural começou, na minha opinião, mais do lado público. Depois também um conjunto de entidades do universo mais privado, nomeadamente das novas fundações (fora a *Gulbenkien*, que é anterior a isto tudo) começaram também a criar uma oportunidade de mercado, nomeadamente nesta relação entre as marcas e o próprio processo cultural. Mais à frente tivemos o *boom* dos festivais, que gerou outro tipo de necessidades. Estamos aqui a falar de camadas diferentes que foram gerando necessidade de competências diferentes, e depois o mercado foi reagindo: numa primeira fase foi sobre os novos equipamentos, o tema das novas políticas para a cultura que incluía a dimensão económica, o aparecimento de mais atores neste processo; Numa fase mais recente a questão dos eventos e festivais que ocuparam muito o que foi o espaço cultural dos territórios e uma necessidade de pensar de forma diferente sobre a alocação de recursos nesses processos. Entraram temas como o turismo, as marcas, patrocínios que geraram um certo *boom* de

desenvolvimento do setor. Não estamos só a falar do setor cultural no sentido mais tradicional, na produção artística e os seus consumos, mas no conjunto de agentes que tiveram um protagonismo importante neste setor, e que também para empresas como nós geraram oportunidades novas. Nós também, o tema do turismo, só muito mais recentemente o trabalhamos, ou o tema da economia criativa e dos eventos, que resultaram destas dinâmicas. Não há aqui um único momento em que tudo isto tenha acontecido, é gradual e vai-se sucedendo. Hoje sinto que essa dimensão mais de “festivalização” na oferta cultural, que aconteceu até por exagero nos últimos anos, com a pandemia, teve um grande retrocesso, e há uma nova questão que se coloca: como é que se gera esse valor se não houver a capacidade de ter as pessoas num mesmo espaço físico em simultâneo em grande escala. Entra de forma muito mais premente a questão do digital.

**(T.A.) Essa é uma parte que irei fazer mais perguntas, o que pretendia perceber é em comparação ao resto da Europa...**

(C.M.) ...nós chegamos mais tarde.

**(T.A.) A lógica em Portugal será então mais ao menos a mesma que já acontecia na Europa, agora a Opium acabou por encontrar essa oportunidade num momento diferente, pois em Portugal o tema chegou mais tarde...**

(C.M.) A nossa democracia é mais recente, e a nossa entrada na UE também. Portanto países como a França, a Alemanha, a Holanda a Bélgica, já estavam nisto desde os anos 60, e nós chegamos nos anos 1980, 1990, 2000. Chegamos após a Revolução de Abril, e após a entrada na UE em 1986. Houve aqui um processo de, pelo menos, 20 anos de diferença face ao processo do centro da Europa. Nós entramos num ciclo mais ou menos próximo dos países de leste (...) nos anos 1980, já após a queda do muro de Berlim, anos 1990, mas como tinham uma base de educação mais elevada, acabaram em alguns casos por nos ultrapassar, em termos das competências e formas de olhar para o setor.

**(T.A.) Em relação aos projetos da Opium em concreto, o seu tipo de clientes são de todas as áreas da gestão cultural que falou, ou existe alguma área em particular que se destacam?**

(C.M.) Nós temos, em graus diferentes, estruturas de âmbito público e privado, por um lado. Muito mais estruturas públicas que privadas. Até porque a nossa abordagem no setor privado é muito mais de fazer parcerias e menos de vender serviços. Temos algumas parcerias com privados, mas sempre porque co-investimos nos projetos. Não somos prestadores de serviços num sentido unidirecional. Não somos como outros setores.

Na parte pública temos projetos de quatro naturezas/geografias: ou projetos de âmbito local, com municípios, ou projetos intermunicipais ou regionais, onde o cliente é de âmbito municipal ou são estruturas regionais de cultura, como a DRCN, ou de Turismo, como a Turismo do Centro; Projetos em que o cliente é uma entidade nacional, neste caso o Ministério da Cultura ou o Turismo de Portugal, que se cruzam com o nosso trabalho; e alguns

projetos em redes ou parcerias internacionais, como temos em projetos com as Nações Unidas, ou com redes europeias. Temos essas quatro gavetas, e são formas muito diferentes de trabalhar. Normalmente a nível dos municípios estamos a falar de gestão de equipamentos: o projeto que estamos a fazer em Faro com a Fábrica da Cerveja, a Candidatura a Capital Europeia da Cultura em Aveiro, são projetos de alguma escala local ou de um equipamento que se quer tornar relevante como foi o caso em Braga do *GNration* (...), fizemos outros em Torres Vedras, Guimarães, etc. É uma lógica em que o município tem uma política no seu orçamento cultural, ou na sua vontade, e precisa de uma entidade externa que ajude a desenvolver aquela competência, nomeadamente a parte da angariação de financiamento e depois a parte de montagem do projeto. É muito aí que nós entramos a nível local.

No [âmbito] intermunicipal ou regional é diferente, porque aí o que está em causa é servir de *pivot* em negociações entre entidades diferentes, sejam mais na criação de redes, na montagem de processos em rede e parceria, o que é muito complicado na lógica política portuguesa. Nós não temos estruturas regionais, só temos municípios e estado central. Quando cinco municípios querem fazer algo em conjunto implica quase sempre haja uma entidade externa e independente que consiga promover este diálogo. Nós temos ocupado muito esse lugar.

Quando se tratam de projetos Nacionais é geralmente porque há um nível de especialidade técnica muito elevada em que é preciso trazer para algum tipo de serviço. Redes Europeias e de apoio internacionais, acontece muitas vezes aqui em Portugal, procuram alguém com o nosso perfil porque aparecemos, por exemplo, na Rede Europeia de Festivais, somos o *hub* português ou somos a porta em Portugal dessa rede Europeia. Quando precisam de alguém com o nosso perfil e que entendem que podemos representar uma rede europeia. Ou agora o *Culture Next*, em que faço parte da direção de uma rede europeia de cidades ligadas às Capitais Europeias da Cultura, também procuram alguém no país que tenha esse tipo de perfil. Aí é mais sermos membros de uma rede maior. Em Portugal, somos o nó de projetos que são de escala diferente, o que foi o caso do projeto com as Nações Unidas com a *UNCTAD*, em que fomos parte de um projeto maior, em que há outros consultores de outros países e fazemos com eles a rede. Cada um destes patamares tem uma abordagem diferente e implica competências e repostas muito diferentes.

**(T.A.) Estamos a falar de uma abrangência geográfica que vai desde a escala local à escala global. Existe alguma relação entre a localização dos escritórios da Opium no Porto e em Aveiro e a proximidade com os clientes?**

(C.M.) Sim sim, nós temos claramente uma vocação maior de projetos do primeiro patamar – regionais e locais – uma abrangência maior a norte e centro, por isso a nossa presença física nesses lugares. Os nacionais ou internacionais não tem nada a ver com (a localização do) o escritório, tem a ver com o perfil. Se fosse em Lisboa ou no Algarve era igual, não faz diferença.

**(T.A.) Portanto existem outras equipas como as da Opium, que trabalham a nível local noutras regiões?**

(C.M.) Sim, há outras empresas que nós conhecemos, quer em Lisboa, quer no Algarve. Mesmo assim, nunca encontramos ninguém que tenha o mesmo perfil, tem a ver com as pessoas e com a experiência. Por exemplo, nós no

Algarve temos trabalhado com consultores algarvios, que são nossos parceiros nesses projetos, entram na equipa nesses projetos, e eles próprios dizem que não há ninguém, outras empresas, que façam esse tipo de trabalho. Estamos também a começar a trabalhar nos Açores e também não há nenhuma empresa lá com esse perfil. Lá está, essa maior especialização no Norte e no Centro também nos permitiu criar um conjunto de respostas que percebemos que não há em todo o país. E permite-nos, por vezes, uma abordagem específica: enquanto no Porto e em Aveiro - no Norte e Centro - temos uma base de várias pessoas que nos permite gerar respostas integradas, noutros lugares vamos ter sempre que recrutar pessoas com outro conhecimento do território. A componente de conhecimento do território é decisiva. Portanto, quando fazemos projetos no Porto ou em Aveiro podemos fazê-los só com a nossa equipa, quando fazemos (projetos) fora temos sempre que recrutar competências nesse território, como temos feito muitas vezes.

**(T.A.) Isso já me responde a uma série de perguntas que tinha! Que tipo de projetos a Opium pretende dedicar-se mais de futuro, o que consideram mais estratégico de momento?**

(C.M.) Claramente a questão da transição digital. O que nos interessa perceber é como a evolução dos projetos de participação cultural para outro tipo de perfis de produção, consumo e oferta, vai necessitar outro tipo de saber no processo de mediação que fazemos muitas vezes. Como é que daqui a 10 anos... Os comportamentos culturais vão implicar que as respostas também sejam muito diferentes, nomeadamente dos agentes públicos, os projetos educativos, o turismo, a organização dos espaços físicos. Será que vale a pena ter incubadoras físicas ou será que as pessoas vão trabalhar digitalmente? Esse tipo de questões... ou como é que, se 10.000 pessoas não se podem encontrar no mesmo lugar físico, como é que essa experiência pode ser partilhada de outras formas? Não porque tenhamos que migrar do analógico para o digital, não acho que seja isso. Vamos conviver com os dois mundos. Mas de facto, o digital, quer pela inovação tecnológica, quer por estas questões mais recentes dos hábitos das pessoas terem mudado, quer porque há novas ferramentas de produção artística; É hoje muito mais fácil de fazer a partir de casa conteúdos culturais de bom nível... tudo isto vai fazer com que haja mais democratização da participação cultural em ambiente digital. Isso implica também outro tipo de práticas: como é que se monetiza, como é que se gera valor local? Como é que se mantém uma identidade cultural do território? Como é que se trabalha mais em rede? Porque também é possível trabalhar mais em rede... Isto são questões novas que temos que aprender a fazer, mas que em última instância, o nosso contributo tem sido mais na perspetiva de como é que se alarga a participação cultural, como é que mais pessoas participam culturalmente. O digital, nesse aspeto, é obviamente uma grande alavanca, que traz uma série de questões, nomeadamente as questões das entidades locais, cada vez mais os hábitos de consumo cultural sem iguais em todas as partes do mundo, os miúdos procuram e consomem a mesma coisa, o que nos torna demasiado uniformes, e era também importante encontrar os fatores de diversidade cultural, de salvaguarda das entidades locais. Isso é para nós um desafio muito grande, pois temos trabalhado no presencial e no analógico, mas trabalhar no digital é muito diferente.

**(T.A.) As circunstâncias que a pandemia agora trouxe em 2020 acabaram por apresentar uma série de oportunidades...**

(C.M.) São desafios, não sei ainda se já serão oportunidades. Não porque seja tudo novo, mas porque acelerou. Houve um aceleramento desse processo.

**(T.A.) Estávamos a falar dos aspetos mais positivos, mas o que houve de mais negativo nesta transição digital, em relação ao trabalho que a Opium já desenvolvia antes?**

(C.M.) O que nós sentimos, em termos muito práticos de uma empresa que trabalha muito com o setor cultural, não só, mas também, à partida, teria tido no último ano uma perda de 80 a 90% de faturação, como aconteceu com todas as empresas que trabalham no setor cultural. Nós tivemos uma perda, mas muito longe desses valores, exatamente porque apenas uma percentagem muito pequena da nossa atividade correspondia a eventos. Ou seja, a produção de processos culturais em que as pessoas tinham que estar no mesmo sítio à mesma hora. Nós fazemos alguns projetos desses, e esses foram claramente descontinuados, nestes últimos dois anos/ neste último ano que se vai prolongar, pelo menos, até ao final deste ano. Esse impacto é de quase dois anos, no qual a atividade se reduz consideravelmente, e que muitas empresas não vão aguentar. No nosso caso não temos isso. Não porque tenhamos encontrado outras fontes de negócio, mas porque isso tinha um peso relativamente baixo da nossa atividade. Ou seja, representava 25% da faturação ou coisa assim. Portanto se perdermos 75% desses 25% permite manter-nos vivos. Outras empresas corresponde a 100% da sua atividade, por isso perderem 75% ou 90%, como algumas, é uma ameaça de morte à sua continuidade. Mesmo assim, isso implica uma mudança que em parte é estrutural dos processos culturais, e nós não queremos ficar fora desse jogo. Pelo contrário, queremos tentar antecipá-lo, e por isso uma das opções foi criar uma empresa em parceria com outra empresa, que só trabalha com a produção de conteúdos para ambientes digitais, um novo negócio que estamos agora a começar, o *Live Art*, e que esperamos que nos próximos anos possa crescer, ocupando esse lugar que a *Opium* não ocupa, nem é da sua natureza ocupar, mas criar uma oportunidade de negócio com pessoas que tenham esse perfil, que saibam desenvolver essas competências e complementem o nosso trabalho e permitam uma retroalimentação daquilo que fazemos já com aquilo que podemos fazer de futuro.

**(T.A.) Quando referiu não se dedicar tanto aos eventos, que são precisamente os que exigem presencialmente uma equipa de vários colaboradores que consigam acompanhá-los, a Opium, apesar dos vários projetos, não tem muitos colaboradores. Mesmo tendo dois polos, distribuídos entre o Porto e Aveiro, qual a dimensão da empresa?**

(C.M.) A *Opium* tem 11 pessoas. A questão é que a produção desses eventos é sempre feita em parceria ou subcontratação. Não temos a pretensão – e já tivemos – de ter produtores. O produtor é uma figura que, nos nossos projetos, é externalizada.

**(T.A.) Ou seja, externalizam frequentemente consultores locais...**

(C.M.) Para projetos que tem uma geografia diferente da nossa, e todo o trabalho de produção

**(T.A.) São esses os principais serviços que externalizam?**

(C.M.) E em parte a comunicação também.

**(T.A.) Algum design?**

(C.M.) Comunicação em geral. Ou seja: nós podemos fazer uma campanha, mas não vamos fazer os *outdoors*, ou *banners*. Fazemos isso com parcerias externas. Às vezes há projetos em que já trazemos essa empresa de comunicação connosco, tipo *design*; Há projetos em que nós subcontratamos, o que geralmente fica do nosso lado é a parte de estratégia de comunicação. Nós definimos a estratégia, mas a implementação é feita em parceria.

**(T.A.) Então qual o tipo de experiência que mais valorizam nessa equipa de 11 pessoas? O que é que têm para quererem continuar a trabalhar com elas?**

(C.M.) Basicamente a capacidade de gerir projetos, ou seja, alocar. Um projeto o que é? Ter um desafio, com um calendário, com um conjunto de entregas, orçamento, e garantir que nesse período as entregas acontecem dentro do prazo, dentro dos recursos disponíveis, e com os indicadores de satisfação ou realização que têm que existir. Essa capacidade de gestão de projetos em setores culturais implica também ter um conhecimento dos processos culturais, como funciona um processo cultural. Como é que eu penso num projeto de uma candidatura? Ou a construção de um espaço físico? Ou a criação de um evento? Ou um evento em rede? É preciso conhecer como é que funcionam as entidades públicas: qual é o perfil da sua comunidade? Que tipo de artistas existem naquele território? Que tipo de infraestruturas existem naquele território? E conseguir entregar o máximo de acordo com esses recursos. São sempre escassos, limitados e específicos. E esse é o papel. Implica saber o quê: Ler o território. Temos pessoas na área da arquitetura, na área do património, que sabem ler território. Também temos pessoas na área da história, das relações internacionais, que implicam conhecimentos complementares a estes; e implica alguns conhecimentos na área de gestão: Eu tenho formação em economia, a Catarina tem formação em economia, a Elisa tem formação em gestão de território...ou seja competências na área da gestão. Normalmente as estruturas culturais não têm pessoas da gestão e economia a par com as pessoas da arquitetura ou das relações internacionais, do património, do turismo, o *design*...é esta a conjugação de competências para que o projeto possa ser gerido, e não procuramos uma pessoa com uma especialidade muito fechada, mas que acima de tudo sejam pessoas curiosas e que tenham a capacidade de integrar conhecimento. Que tenham algum conhecimento, e que integrem outro, na gestão daquele projeto, para entregar ao cliente determinado produto. Se estamos a fazer um projeto que é uma rede patrimonial, como fizemos com a DRCN, temos x espaços patrimoniais e é preciso construir um projeto artístico, ou um conjunto de eventos, que tem um impacto turístico. É preciso conhecer o património, é preciso ler aquela comunidade, é preciso conhecer a oferta cultural que faça sentido para aquele lugar, é preciso saber produzir aquele evento, é preciso comunicá-lo, é preciso saber fazer contas: qual é o custo dentro do orçamento disponível? Isto tudo são competências diferentes. Não há ninguém que tenha isto tudo. Portanto as equipas têm como competência *core* estas coisas. Depois fora - montar o palco, luz, fazer flyers- isso já não é tão *core*, tão central. Não é o essencial para esses projetos, e isso podemos subcontratar. A ideia é sempre essa: ter um núcleo duro de pessoas que consigam ler as necessidades de um projetos, saberem implementar esse projeto, e saber aquilo que tem que ficar de fora e ser

subcontratado fora. Não há multinacional que possa integrar tudo, não é possível. Até porque se tivéssemos 3 ou 4 produtores, este ano teríamos um problema gigante: Eram 3 ou 4 pessoas que não iríamos conseguir pô-las a fazer nada. E se calhar não tivessem uma capacidade tão abrangente para fazer outras coisas. Muitas vezes são perfis muito mais especializados que são menos ágeis quando é necessário fazer outro tipo de coisa. Interessa-nos mais essa agilidade.

**(T.A.) Em termos de RH, a aposta que fizeram acabou por ser bastante estratégica no momento em que estamos a atravessar.**

(C.M.) É estratégico mas não foi coincidência, porque nos preocupa muito essa dimensão. (...) Uma empresa pequena não pode ter excesso de custos. Nem as grandes, mas no nosso caso não íamos aguentar. Por isso, quando percebemos que temos que contratar alguém é porque há uma área que está em défice permanente, e implica uma resposta. Mais recentemente as últimas pessoas contratadas foram na área da economia e na área da gestão do território, eram temas que estavam em défice porque tinham saído outras pessoas. Nós subcontratamos primeiro, não correu tão bem, e por isso decidimos integrar. Mesmo assim numa lógica sempre temporária porque, normalmente os contratos são a termo precisamente porque têm que ver com ciclos de projetos, e os ciclos mudam muito. Neste ciclo de projeto sabemos que temos pessoas suficientes neste perfil, se houver mais pontos digitais precisamos de outros perfis. E se calhar vamos ter que contratar outras pessoas com esses perfis.

**(T.A.) Isso poderá ser um investimento de futuro?**

(C.M.) Vai ser com certeza, ou via *Opium* ou via *Live Art*, vai acontecer.

**(T.A.) Em relação às ferramentas digitais que já estavam a utilizar, e aquelas que sentiram mais necessidade com a questão do trabalho remoto/teletrabalho. Mantiveram ou houve necessidade de investimento?**

(C.M.) Houve uma necessidade de investimento. As ferramentas que tínhamos eram mais ferramentas de gestão: *software* de gestão de projetos e de produtividade, gestão de ficheiros, nuvem, mail...mas obviamente precisávamos de uma ferramenta de comunicação entre as pessoas. O *Teams* é uma ferramenta paga e profissional, mas que nos permite estar em contacto muito mais rapidamente de forma imediata, trocar ficheiros, ter pastas partilhadas, em tempo real, e com a possibilidade de comunicar por voz ou por imagem em tempo real. É usado por várias pessoas, em vários escritórios. Gostamos dessa solução, que foi só adquirida em Março de 2020, quando começamos a trabalhar à distância.

**(T.A.) E dessa experiência com o Teams, existe, da vossa experiência, algum tipo de atividade ou interação que sintam que há ainda necessidade de colmatar? Algumas coisas que começam a perceber que vão precisar para complementar?**

(C.M.) Hum...não...ah...acho que o próprio mercado de *software* está a evoluir muito rapidamente para acompanhar essas necessidades. Todos os dias estão a ser lançadas coisas novas; mesmo dentro do *Teams* lançam funcionalidades novas, a mesma coisa com a Google, com outros softwares semelhantes. Estão a perceber muito bem as necessidades do mercado, e estão a reagir quase todas as

semanas a situações novas. E não mais caras: os preços têm-se mantido.

O que nós sentimos é que vamos ter que mudar o próprio modelo de organização. Uma coisa é trabalhar toda a gente no escritório, outra coisa é trabalhar toda a gente em casa. Há de haver um modelo futuro que será híbrido. E portanto vamos ter que encontrar uma forma de ritmo de trabalho e processo de trabalho em que possamos estar parte do tempo no escritório, e parte do tempo em casa, não porque haja pandemia, mas porque é uma opção. Acho que esse modelo vai ser muito mais híbrido, muito mais elástico. E provavelmente o melhor modelo, que eu antecipo que é o que vai acontecer na *Opium*, é cada um escolher onde quer trabalhar: quer ficar aquele dia em casa, fica em casa; quero ir para o escritório, fico no escritório. Não haver uma regra pré-definida, a não ser um dia / uma tarde por semana para estarmos juntos a fazer planeamento e conversar. Precisamos também desse encontro humano. Mas que seja mais ao ritmo das pessoas. Prova-se com este tipo de modelo, acho, que a produtividade pode existir, mesmo trabalhando em casa. Mas também é muito cansativo esta rotina de todos os dias estar a trabalhar a partir de casa. De vez em quando precisamos de sair, apanhar ar, estar com as pessoas. Portanto vamos deixar isso, de forma livre, espontânea, ao livre arbítrio de cada pessoa, acreditando que o que for melhor para a pessoa é o melhor para a empresa.

**(T.A.) Ou seja, esta questão de ter cada vez mais a integração digital e o que, as ferramentas de comunicação nos permitem fazer está a reforçar que, no final, se abra a liberdade das próprias pessoas escolherem, e não a ferramenta a dizer o que se pode ou não fazer?**

(C.M.) Nós temos que contrariar a ferramenta, para não desumanizar as relações, mas ao mesmo tempo perceber a sua utilidade. Se uma pessoa que anda todos os dias no transporte público, para trás e para a frente uma hora, se entender que durante dois ou três dias não quer ter esse tipo de cansaço... Pode ficar em casa, e ser igualmente produtiva, que isso seja possível de utilizar numa empresa. Mas também entender que não é bom que um conjunto de pessoas, que são uma comunidade de colegas de trabalho, passem toda a vida sem se encontrar, não faz muito sentido. Que seja um processo orgânico, evolutivo, mas que tendencialmente vai ser híbrido, na minha opinião.

**(T.A.) Essa experiência com os clientes: eles também conseguem acompanhar e perceber essa flexibilidade, ou a relação com o cliente acabou por se tornar diferente, por grande parte das vezes ser com o intermédio de um ecrã, de uma videoconferência?**

(C.M.) É muito diferente, porque as entidades privadas se organizaram muito rapidamente; as entidades públicas não. E nota-se isso: nós começamos a utilizar o *Teams*, decidimos um dia utilizar o Microsoft 235, no dia seguinte começamos a utilizar. Na Câmara Municipal não é assim que funciona. Acho que internamente conseguimos organizar-nos, mas a relação com o cliente não é assim tão pacífica, não foi tão fluído.

**(T.A.) Será uma necessidade que o cliente vai sentir, ainda mais? Fazer essa transição? Principalmente clientes públicos cuja transição não é tão fluida, célere, como o momento assim exige?**

(C.M.) Sim, acho que muitos deles vão regressar ao

analgico, puro e duro, sem esse esforço de evolução. Tens uma reunião em Évora, e lá vai uma pessoa de Bragança para estar lá meia hora e voltar porque não percebem que não faz sentido. O modelo de organização implica que todas as pessoas estejam presentes aquela hora, mesmo que não seja muito produtivo. Isso ainda é muito a prática... O que eu sinto é que há muitas entidades que estão mortinhas para voltar a fazer isso.

**(T.A.) Vai haver então um mundo a dois ritmos? O privado que vai levar esta oportunidade de transição para criar alguma flexibilidade e conseguir chegar a outros sítios onde não tinha essa oportunidade, mas se calhar o público vai ficar ainda mais distanciado?**

(C.M.) Eu não separava 100% público e 100% privado. Percentualmente, ou proporcionalmente, serão mais as entidades privadas a fazer essa rápida evolução, do que as entidades públicas. E vice-versa no caso de voltar ao passado. Ainda não é passado, mas um passado muito recente. Serão mais as entidades públicas a trazê-lo do que as empresas privadas, mas haverá entidades que o irão fazer, não separo assim as coisas a preto e branco.

**(T.A.) O último assunto tem a ver com a relação da Opium com a Candidatura de Aveiro 2027, e estávamos já a caminhar para isso. Em que contexto é que surgiu a oportunidade de trabalhar com a Câmara Municipal de Aveiro no Plano Estratégico para a Cultura de Aveiro?**

(C.M.) Nós recebemos vários contactos de várias cidades no processo de candidatura a *Capital Europeia da Cultura*, assim que foi cada vez mais público e notória essa oportunidade de candidatura a *Capital Europeia da Cultura*. Tivemos convites de várias cidades, também de Aveiro. Reunimos com a Câmara de Aveiro, e na altura o que sugerimos foi, por razões óbvias, o *Bid book*, o livro de candidatura, implica de forma obrigatória que as cidades tenham um plano estratégico para a cultura. Não só porque é uma obrigação do *Bid book*, mas nós também entendemos que não faz sentido acolher um evento, ou ter um selo *Capital Europeia da Cultura* sem saber porque é que o faz, sem saber qual a estratégia que está por detrás disso. Propusemos começar por essa opção, por elaborar um Plano Estratégico...

**(T.A.) Foi a própria Opium que, com o contacto da C.M.A., sugeriu desenvolver o plano estratégico primeiro?**

(C.M.) Sim. Dissemos que não fazíamos candidatura nenhuma enquanto não fizéssemos um Plano Estratégico, e estávamos disponíveis para o fazer. E isso aconteceu.

**(T.A.) Quando é que isso aconteceu?**

(C.M.) Foi em 2018...

**(T.A.) O Plano Estratégico é de 2019...**

(C.M.) ...A decisão foi em 2018, a decisão de ir por esse caminho foi do final de 2018. O plano Estratégico já foi desenvolvido em 2019.

**(T.A.) E já havia a ideia em Aveiro, antes de 2018, de se querer candidatar ao título de *Capital Europeia da Cultura*.**

(C.M.) Sim, em 2018 foi quando nos fizeram esse contacto. A sugestão foi nossa, a Câmara acolheu, e foi, segundo sei, a primeira das cidades candidatas, a ter um plano estratégico. Aquela que mais cedo foi por esse caminho.

**(T.A.) Quais as fases que já foram desenvolvidas do plano de candidatura?**

(C.M.) Foi desenvolvido o Plano estratégico, foi desenvolvido o Modelo de gestão também, a criação dos órgãos representativos (a comissão de honra, o concelho estratégico e a comissão executiva) foi começado um trabalho de desenvolvimento de parcerias internacionais, redes e parcerias internacionais, foi desenvolvida já a definição da equipa técnica da Câmara que vai acompanhar o assunto, foi estruturado um calendário de trabalho, até à entrega do *Bid book*, e foi desenvolvido também já, ou está a iniciar-se o trabalho a nível da participação local. Temos constituída uma equipa que vai começar no terreno, com o João Rosa que vai coordenar esse trabalho, incluindo a participação cultural, e ainda a estratégia de comunicação, já iniciada a sua implementação.

**(T.A.) Quais são as oportunidades de futuro com esse projeto? Qual é o interesse da Opium em continuar a acompanhar a candidatura de Aveiro, e o que é que isso pode significar para a empresa?**

(C.M.) Desde logo é um projeto, um trabalho, e uma empresa precisa de ter projetos, trabalho e de pagar contas. É uma oportunidade comercial de imediato. Mas o que nos motiva não é só isso. Isso é instrumental. O que nos motiva é perceber que uma cidade coloca a cultura no centro da sua opção política. E uma *Capital Europeia da Cultura* não pode ser mais uma coisinha que se faz no meio de mil. É uma decisão importante, estrutural, implica um grande investimento e compromisso político, e obviamente que gostamos de trabalhar com cidades que têm essa opção. A opção de por a cultura no centro da sua vida política. Mais do que isso, partem para este processo de candidatura com a ideia de que, não tendo o título, não é o fim do processo. Mesmo que não ganhe o título, o processo tem que justificar de tal forma a sua pertinência que, mesmo que sem o título, a cidade possa querer continuar. E nós temos já alguns sinais em Aveiro, com algumas das ações que estão a ser pensadas, que o município já assumiu desenvolve-las mesmo que não tenha o título em 2022, 2023, quando for atribuído, pretende continua-las. E a nossa oportunidade também é por aí. É perceber que nós podemos ser úteis para além da candidatura. São anos a decidir com base em critérios subjetivos, a probabilidade de uma cidade ter o título é de menos de 10%. São 11 cidades, basta fazer as contas rapidamente. Não há nenhuma cidade que, á partida, tenha mais probabilidade do que outra. A cidade sabe que vai ter menos de 10% de hipóteses de ter o título. A questão é se quer ou não continuar a ter a cultura como um plano de desenvolvimento. É isso que o Plano Estratégico ajudou a discutir e a refletir. Acreditamos que Aveiro quer, mas são sempre decisões que ultrapassam uma empresa privada. A pergunta é quais são as oportunidades: é um projeto, independentemente do título. É essa a principal motivação, e acreditamos que não será todo o programa implementável, mas parte dele pode acontecer, independentemente de ter o título ou não. E há muitos bons exemplos de cidades que concorreram a *Capital Europeia da Cultura*, não obtiveram o título, e mesmo assim fizeram projetos muito interessantes, após esse momento.

**(T.A.) Falou ao início do ponto de vista comercial. Desde esse ponto de vista, existe, por exemplo, algum tipo de projetos para a Opium são bastante vantajosos, ou que criam uma sucessão de projetos depois disso? Ou há outros projetos que são realizados, até representam um valor interessante mas não tem necessariamente uma**

### **continuidade?**

(C.M.) Como temos projetos que são sempre de clientes, não temos projetos próprios (são poucos), ficamos sempre dependentes da mudança dos políticos, do fim do financiamento comunitário, do ritmo que o projeto tem... nós normalmente estamos no início de um projeto e, por exemplo, apresentamos o desenvolvimento para um equipamento. Está desenvolvido, está implementado, vamos embora. Não é gerir o dia-a-dia. Houve casos em que fizemos mas não é essa a prioridade nem é nesse sentido que os clientes querem, pretende que os ajudem no início e depois assumem eles a gestão. O que admito que possa ser diferente é em dois mundos: o mundo digital, porque a escalabilidade permite ter outro tipo de soluções, e a própria *Opium* investir em projetos seus. Era uma coisa que andava a pensar fazer antes da pandemia, criar um festival próprio (e aí seria uma coisa de continuidade), mas ainda bem que não o decidimos fazer a tempo! (risos) Vamos aguardar que as coisas serenem e pensar noutros projetos, num espaço físico, ou um evento regular, uma área de formação, mas acredito mais que isso vá pela via do digital que vai acontecer.

**(T.A.) Última pergunta, relativamente às adaptações ou alterações que foram necessárias fazer no processo de Candidatura de Aveiro a *Capital Europeia da Cultura*, com o impacto da pandemia agora em 2020. Do trabalho que a *Opium* se tinha disposto a fazer/tinha sido contratada, houve alguma alteração? Alguns contratamentos? De que forma isso foi impactado? Ou não: trata-se de uma candidatura a longo prazo e, comparativamente com outro tipo de projetos, não alterou assim tanto?**

(C.M.) Alterou duas coisas principais: O processo de participação local (...) A candidatura não é só escrever um livro, é também envolver a comunidade à volta dessa vontade e dessa energia. E isso foi tudo adiado. Foi adiado até agora, e só agora é que se vai começar essa parte... Houve muitos meses em que, nem em Aveiro nem noutras cidades, foi possível fazer esse trabalho. Mas acima de tudo esta experiência da pandemia permitiu antecipar... ter contactou ou identificar outras dimensões do que pode ser o trabalho cultural de uma cidade que vão ser muito importantes a passar no *Bid book*, o livro de candidatura. Por exemplo, um *Bid book*, ou outros projetos culturais têm que pensar numa lógica de gestão de contingência. Isso é uma das características que, quando se pensa num projeto, o que posso mitigar de riscos que o projeto possa ter? As cidades *Capitais Europeias da Cultura 2020*, Rijeka e Galway, fizeram um plano de contingência, como todas têm que fazer. Mas não fizeram um plano de contingência antecipando uma pandemia. As duas ficaram completamente bloqueadas. Foram milhões de euros de investimento que tiveram zero consequência e não conseguiram transformar aquele projeto noutra coisa, noutra suporte, noutra canal. E mesmo quando estenderam o tempo de execução do evento, não conseguiram implementar grande parte do projeto. Isso permitiu-nos perceber que isso da contingência estava mal pensado. Temos que pensar muito mais longe, em alterações muito mais radicais. E isso impacta bastante para quem hoje está a fazer um planeamento para *Capital Europeia da Cultura*. Não só o processo de trabalho tem mudado, como o próprio objeto de trabalho mudou. O objeto de trabalho já não é uma *Capital Europeia da Cultura* como evento presencial, mas uma *Capital Europeia da Cultura* de uma cidade que quer

ampliar e dimensão cultural, independentemente do suporte em que o faz: seja, digital, analógico, com muita ou pouca gente junta, seja com distância social ou as escolas fechadas ou abertas, e tem que se pensar nessas possibilidades todas. Até aqui não era assim que se pensava. E isto altera muito a maneira como se vê o próprio projeto.

**(T.A.) É esse o contributo que pretendo dar com o meu relatório de estágio, tendo estado a colaborar com a equipa que vai estar a desenvolver uma das primeiras candidaturas a *Capital Europeia da Cultura* tem em conta o contexto trazido pela pandemia. Creio que a primeira candidatura a ser selecionada foi *Chemnitz 2025* em que o *Bid book* já faz referência ao contexto atual....**

(C.M.) Mas de forma muito leve.

**(T.A.) Na altura em que submeteram ainda estávamos no início. Agora tanto Portugal como a Letónia vão ter um paradigma bastante diferente, e a integração digital será adereçada de forma muito diferente.**

(C.M.) É um grande desafio, há muitas pistas de reflexão interessante

**(T.A.) Espero conseguir tocar alguns desses pontos, essa entrevista ajudou muito a orientar-me nesse sentido; espero tirar o melhor proveito possível, por isso agradeço muito a disponibilidade!**



## APPENDIX C

### Bench-marking digital touch points from Galway2020, Bad Ischl2024 and Chemnitz2025 bid book programmes (2020.11.27)

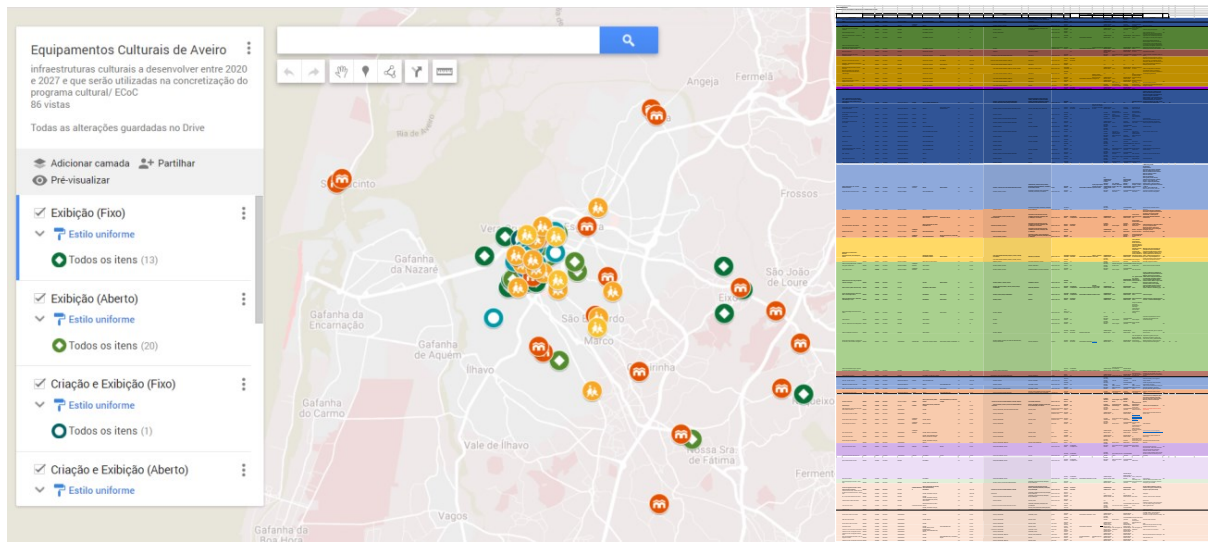
		Galway (2015) 2020/2021	Bad Ischl (2019) 2024	Chemnitz (2020) 2025
New tools and contents	Experience	virtual visual arts installation bridges to remove borders between countries; <b>Longitude- Latitude</b>	<b>sound and visual installation</b> on nature and everyday urban facilities creating synesthetic effects both recording and listening/watching; <b>video sound installation</b> artistically recorded to be online documented. These makes edition and digital mediation as part of the artwork itself and allows new contents and formats. Water Sound Flows; Hallstatt Disappears	<b>smart home technology, 360 degrees filming</b> , offering <b>virtual reality</b> experiences from the city, taking part in plays as <b>augmented reality installations, triggering geolocation.</b> Maker-space.eu
		world's first linked network of <b>virtually immersive, multi-user environments</b> (20m x 20m cubes) in seven cities across the globe; proposes to change how people experience cultural events at same time worldwide. <b>Mixed Reality Teleoperations</b>		
		create the possibility of people from different part of the world to be attending events in Galway using <b>stereoscopic video, three dimensional sound 360° visual omni directional audio immersion; 360 Virtual Reality Broadcasting</b>		<b>hybrid digital/analogic experience events</b> , like the big opening event will mix both digital and real worlds.
		<b>hologram mediums and augmented reality technologies</b> to create 3d models to be transmitted worldwide. <b>Real Time Holoportations</b>	<b>online exhibition</b> with audio and extra info from the contents developed and live exhibitions. XIBIT infoguide platform, Talking Busts	
		<b>Augmented reality film tours, Pervasive Media, IOT, Coding, Immersive mediums, Virtual reality creation</b>	Communication projects through <b>Radio and Digital</b>	
	Creation	<b>Live 360° Virtual Reality Broadcasting; Stereoscopic Video 3d sound for omni directional audio a visual immersion</b> in different parts of the world from one single place. <b>Virtual Futures</b>		<b>Platform for makers participate, create, build and discuss</b> ; The digital approach is not considered an add-on, but a way of interacting and creating that wouldn't be possible without it, in a <b>integrated way</b> . Creators also learn how to <b>contact directly digital communities</b> through <b>messaging apps, virtual marketing and contemporary social media platforms.</b> Maker-space.eu
	Reflection	<b>new perspectives of the world, new narratives and forms of artistic expression; awareness to copyrights of digital formats</b> <b>Window on the World</b>		<b>Monitoring, evaluation and dissemination and Data collection processes can be transformed into art- installation;</b>
	Multidisciplinary research	changing the <b>boundaries</b> between traditional cultural sectors by introducing multidisciplinary <b>technological</b> approach and the contemporary <b>appliance of arts and media.</b> <b>Vr Story studio</b>	<b>database open source platform for regional knowledge practises and network for cooperation</b> within European crafts industries combining both <b>entertainment and scientific research.</b> Atlas of Tradition	<b>research and exchange center with technology companies</b> to influence the development of new technologies <b>applied to the CCI's practices</b> and production. Maker-space.eu
	Displacement	<b>multisubject artistic residences</b> for creators and researchers in old <b>monasteries</b> <b>Pilgrim</b>	<b>mobile office</b> to reach audiences from different locations and give access to digital tools; <b>Mobile first! Nomadic communication point.</b>	public intervention and political discussion through <b>digital art intervention and installation on Chemnitz.de</b> municipal platform, participating <b>on digital locations of the city.</b>
			<b>Bluetooth Beacons reinforce signal</b> and connection to all digital contents in the area;	
Access distribution	Remote access	<b>live broadcasting and video on demand platform</b> , with partnership with national broadcaster; <b>broadcasting future labs</b> for research on how people will remotely access cultural events and activities; <b>broadcasting festivals and classes.</b> <b>Cube Connected Cities</b>	with the existing <b>local radio</b> , this approach is financially supported by the E.U's LEADER program. <b>The Freies radio Salzkammergut</b>	<b>Spotify Podcasts</b> with citizens reading parts of bid book; <b>Radio Livestream of concerts</b>
	On-demand access	<b>live broadcasting and a Video on Demand platform</b> to stream projects, events and activities on web and mobile channels;	<b>digital archives</b> where locals and visitors are invited to contribute with <b>audio-visual contents</b> to be edited and broadcasted in several episodes and to <b>inspire creation</b> ; With the existing "The Freies radio Salzkammergut", this radio approach is financially supported by the E.U's LEADER program.	<b>multimedia podcasts.</b> Maker-space.eu
	Citizen participation	<b>decentralized network of citizen communicators</b> <b>European Citizen Broadcasting</b> <b>volunteers to cover the digital presence</b> of the events and activities. <b>Volunteer Media team/lab</b>	<b>Medien Portal; Salt Opera Project</b>	<b>live stream.</b>

Mobile and digital infrastructure	Capacity building	digital literacy for new ways of communication and interaction with children and teachers around the world through immersive digital program. Immersive Classroom	with international knowledge exchange, digitalisation in schools is the key for more competitive learning experience in rural locations; connect cultural production to a new technology savvy audience as a new target group. SKUL - IT schools; Welocally	digital literacy
	Participation and co-creation	suitable immersive digitaly interactive and online/mobile platform;	intergenerational Co-creation models, delivering capacity building for digital activities with older generations	engage the public by participate actively digitaly during the preparation of the program, making it a way of developing co-ownership of the projects and not only a contact tool. Digital Galore! Integration of digital communities in the creators' process through messaging apps, virtual marketing and contemporary social media platforms. This allows to change how digital interaction is often seen as an isolation and anti-democratic social interaction, to become a more proactive way of reaching people despite the physical distance and physical access conditions. Digital Galore!
		work over feeds of crowd source broadcast empowering people's participation on content creation. Re-Mix Me		
	Commercial service	ICT learning platforms as online portal to showcase of cultural products and brands	smart Labels; Promote local creative people and industries in and out of the region, developing formats that make them easy to be presented and commercialised outside (e-books)	digital marketing, making use of online shopping through the popular marketplace platforms with a twist in the way they're present, in a funny and provocative way, so they can be also applied in a messaging universe.
	Customer service	socially interact with live events and to fulfill practical needs such as customer service (tickets, ratings, real-time feedback)	ask pop-up questions that users can answer voluntarily. Bad Ischl-SKGT24 app	support platform (contacts registration) and chat bots. Maker-space.eu
	Digital Activity Program	specific virtual programme as a parallel offer to conventional presence spaces, performances and events.		digital as the biggest event space: digital event strategy as na Hybrid reality. Maker-space.eu
	Digital location	support online presence of cultural and creative organisations and create digital infrastructure	capacity building and mapping platform that helps to reshape the region's facilities and its usage, connecting the citizens from all the region with cultural and creative initiatives. Welocally	digital mapping of cultural sites, interactive platform
			the virtual library for storytelling about creative work in Salzkammergut to compensate the inexistence of a physical one. Salzkammergut 365-thenewsalt.eu (still under construction)	associate public services to digital access as social integration
			associate places to podcasts through QR codes	digitalisation of cultural organizations
	Cultural Entrepreneurship	entry point portal for small business and individuals to become involved in financial support for Galway 2020 (networking, opportunities, events). Galways2020 Club	database open source platform for regional knowledge practises and network for cooperation within European crafts industries combining both entertainment and scientific research. Some of the results are materialized in the renovation of buildings, through the program Building Culture SKGT. Atlas of Tradition	creative professional platform for network, promotion, cooperation, support and info. Maker-space.eu
Governance Integration		Governance and delivery structure: network and cooperation with both regular meetings and capacity building management to support communication. Regional Cooperation Platform Salzkammergut:		
Data processing	analysing data and measuring social habits;		data collection on CCI via mobile app survey, gamification or interactive tools such as digital slingshots.	
Social Media Interaction	Online Community building	building online communities for mass participation in offline activities; results on engagement, mobile interaction, community self-empowerment (autonomy of usage, dissemination and project development). Community Forum	creation of digital communities with activities programmed to leave both physical and digital statements from participants Europe-wide. Bring Your Salt weblog	social-apps Tinder-like match for makers/ loners to fight against isolation and find common interests; consider different ways to socialize addressing both the more outgoing audience in a ludic experience and the more reserved and ceptic audiences to start participating from their familiar environment. Spaces if Generosity
	Community Exchange		online couch-surfing platform to host visitors. Surf the SKGT Couch marketing and communication strategy to be present not only in personal devices, but also at gathering community locations (schools, retirement homes, pubs, local markets.	language barrier-breaker apps 7 villages - Theatre in the region

(Galway2020, 2016; Bad Ischl2024, 2019; Chemnitz2025, 2020)

## APPENDIX D

### *Aveiro cultural infrastructure mapping format and database back office (2020.10.26)*



## APPENDIX E

Page from presentation model of Aveiro's cultural mapping platform (2020.11.19)

The image displays a user interface for a cultural mapping platform, divided into two main sections: a profile card for a gallery space and an exploration map.

**Espaço (Space) Profile Card:**

- tipologia (typology):** galeria (gallery) is selected.
- ciclo (cycle):** empty.
- subsetor (subsector):** empty.
- acolhimento (reception):** empty.
- ordenar por (order by):** IQO / popularidade / novidade / exterior / avançada.
- nome do espaço (space name):** galeria - raio km.
- Image:** A photograph of a grand, ornate building facade with multiple arched windows.
- slogan/mensagem (slogan/message):** Identificando a dinâmica, destinatários e sub-setor/ciclo.
- ficha técnica (technical sheet) / link:** Includes sections for parceiros participantes, parceiros institucional, parceiros coordenação, and parceiros patrocinadores.

**explorar (explore) Map:**

- A map of Europe with a red dot indicating the location of the gallery space in Aveiro, Portugal.
- Other countries labeled include: Suécia, Noruega, Finlândia, Estónia, Letónia, Lituânia, Polónia, Bielorrússia, Ucrânia, Roménia, Bulgária, Grécia, Turquia, Itália, França, Alemanha, Países Baixos, Reino Unido, Irlanda, Espanha, Portugal, Mar do Norte, Dinamarca, Oceano Báltico, Mar Negro, Mar Tirreno, Roma, Praga, Viena, Chequia, Eslováquia, Hungria, Croácia, Sérvia, Moldávia, and Moscú.

**passo 3**

## APPENDIX F

### Proposal on the organisation concept for a Creative Hub in Aveiro (2021.01.29)

#### profissionais criativos

Residências de curadoria, programação e mediação;

Grandes produções e digresões (locais e internacionais);

Investigação, experimentação, conferências, formação profissional, e capacitação de agentes locais;

Apoio à gestão, internacionalização, digitalização, marketing, e com equipamento técnico;

Calls e programas de financiamento.

#### comunidade e visitantes

Visita, atividades, workshops, roteiros e festivais;

Espetáculos de grande dimensão;

Restauração, atividade noturna;

Espaços coworking e e-learning;

Expositor Comercial das ICC's.



#### Polo Setorial

#oficina de criação  
#ferramenta de produção  
#permanência  
#enraizamento  
#regular  
#longo prazo

#### profissionais criativos

Residências artísticas de longa duração;

Co-produção comunitária, associada às praticas locais e a um subsetor criativo;

Intercâmbios regulares com outros polos setoriais.

Estúdios e/ou oficinas especializadas tecnicamente num subsetor criativo com oferta de serviços criativos.

#### comunidade e visitantes

Apoio na oferta de formação artística continua;

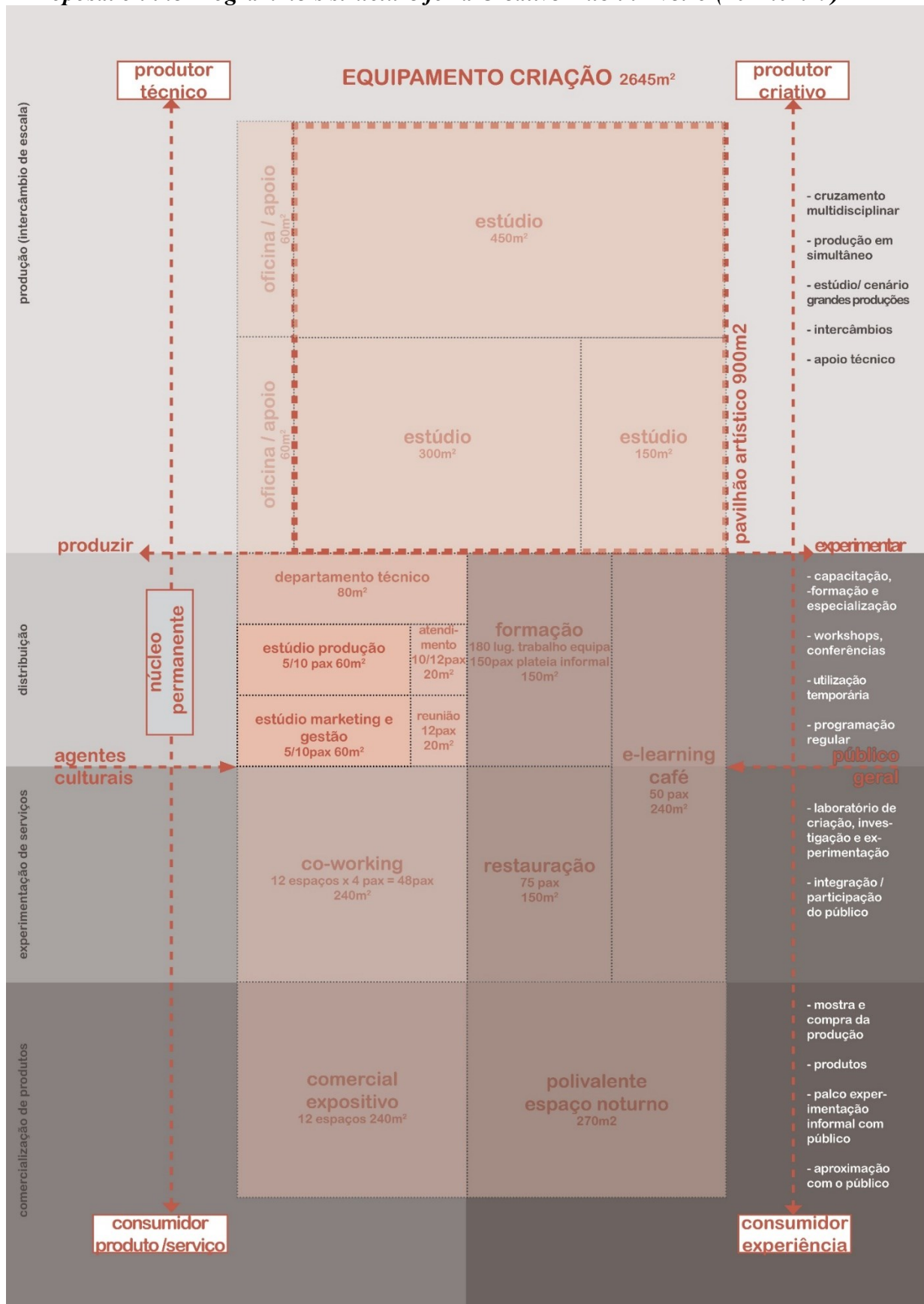
Acolhimento de associações e escolas artísticas locais para produções;

Atividades culturais para a integração social (intergeracional, proveniência, empregabilidade) e de intervenção no território;

Aluguer de espaços.

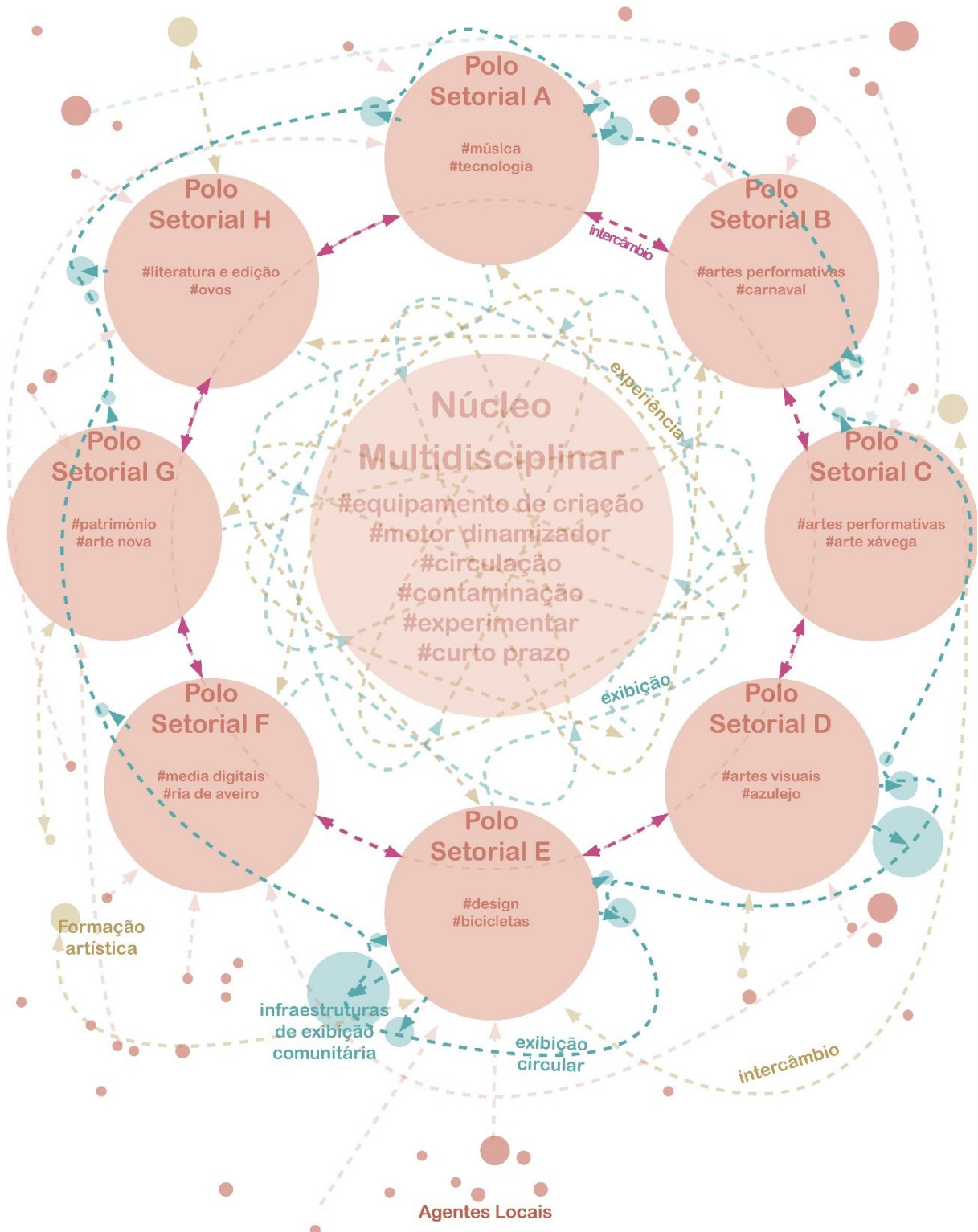
**APPENDIX G**

**Proposal on the Programme's structure for a Creative Hub in Aveiro (2021.01.29)**



## APPENDIX H

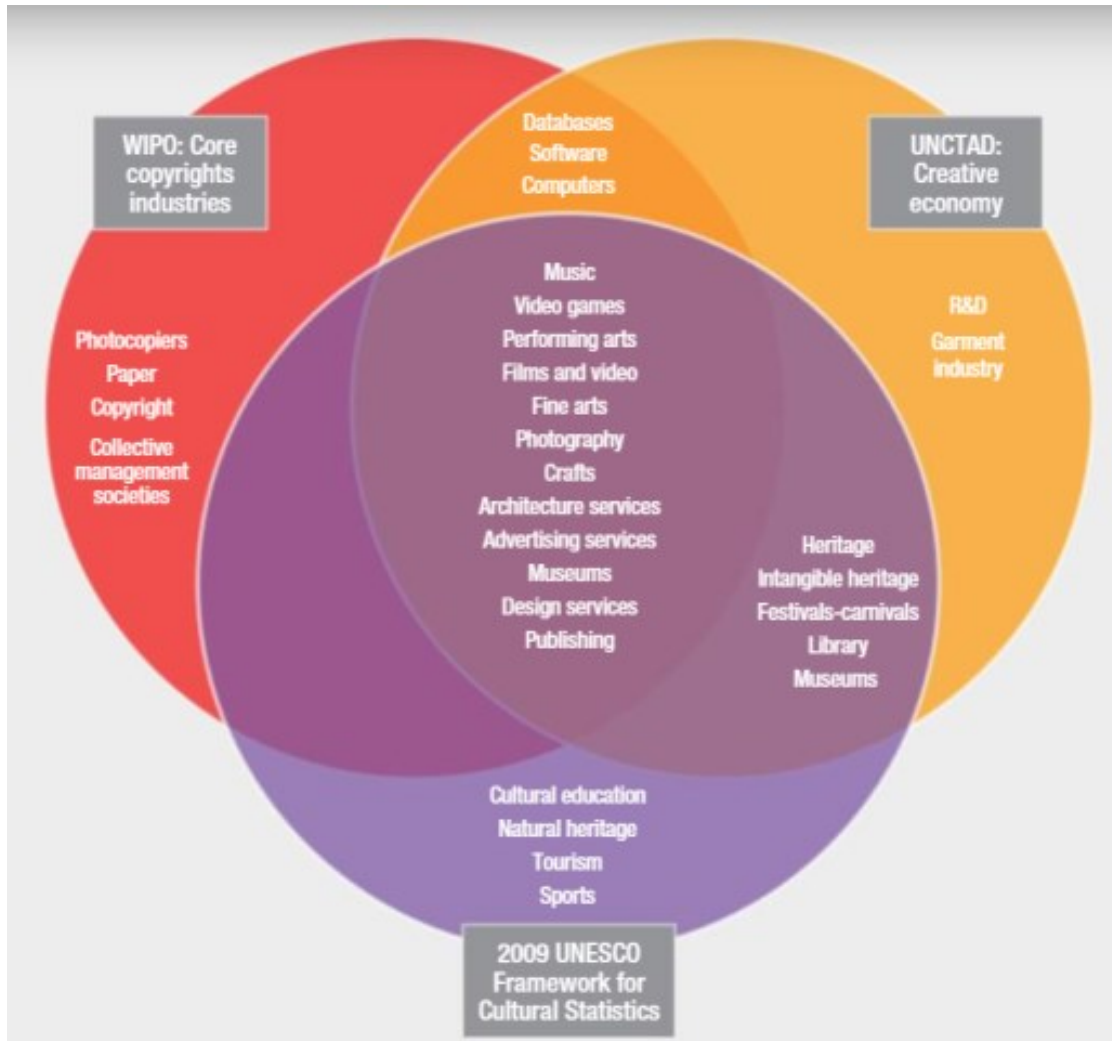
### Proposal on the Programme's dynamic between the Creative Hub and the local clusters in Aveiro (2021.01.29)





## ANNEX A

### *Common definitions of the culture/creative sector by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015 (UIS, 2016)*



## ANNEX B

### *11th Strategic Goal from Aveiro's Strategic Plan for Culture (Aveiro, Câmara Municipal, 2019)*

## Objetivos Estratégicos

### **O11. Adequar os equipamentos e infraestruturas culturais às novas necessidades do município**

- O desenvolvimento de um plano para a cultura tem que, necessariamente, ser acompanhado por uma identificação das necessidades de equipamentos e infraestruturização, de modo a dar resposta ao programa a ser desenvolvido. Entende-se que este desafio não deve ser entendido somente a partir da necessidade de definição de espaços para criação, para ensaio ou para exibição. Deve sim estar integrado e articulado com os processos de reabilitação e revitalização urbana, considerando o papel que as atividades artísticas e criativas podem ter na devolução de espaços que foram importantes na dinâmica social, económica e cultural e que se encontram devolutos ou abandonados.
- Neste contexto, é de salientar a dimensão cultural do PEDUCA - Plano Estratégico de Desenvolvimento Urbano da Cidade de Aveiro, com destaque para a instalação da nova biblioteca e a criação de espaços públicos qualificados para acolhimento de eventos culturais.

## ANNEX C

### Diagram Cultural Hub Model (Galway2020, 2016:12) and Planned Cultural Venues (Galway2020, 2016:72)



Project	Completion Date	Status	Delivery Partners	Est. Cost
Spanish Parade Picture Palace	Feb 2017	Fit out stage	DAHG, Bord Scannan, WDC, Solus Picture Palace Teo, Element Pictures, Galway City Council	€7.9m
Nun's Island Galway City and County Library	2020	Planning stage	Galway City Council, Galway County Council, The Library Council, NUIG, ERDF	€12m
Dyke Road Cultural Hub - Gallery/ Perform/ Music/ Producers & Rehearsal space	2020	Planning stage	ERDF, Galway City Council, Private Sector joint venture	€13m
Children's Creativity Hub	2019	Renovation/ Refurbishment	Galway City Council, Baboró, Branar, Galway Community Circus	€3.5m
Sea Gate District Museum/Historic Centre Hub Expansion	2020	Proposal Stage	Galway City Council, Fáilte Ireland, Nat. Museum of Ireland, DAHG, Marine Institute, NUIG	€4m
Merchant's Rd Lower Artists Studios & Residential Spaces	2018	Planning Stage	Galway City Council	€5k
Nun's Island Youth Arts Space & Hub	2017	Planning Stage	Galway City Council, Galway Arts Centre, Galway Youth Theatre, Galway Youth Arts Alliance, Macnas, Arts Council	€3m
Cluain Muire CCAM Creative Hub, Enterprise Centre + Venue Acoustic Music & Perform	2018/19	Design Stage	GMIT, Galway City Council	€4m
New Theatre NUIG	2018	Under construction	NUIG	€3m
Leisureland Music/ performance venue	2020	Renovation/ adaptation	Galway City Council	tbc

**ANNEX D**

*Urban Creative Cycle of Creative Hubs, based on Charles Landry (Lima, 2015:50)*





