



Implementation period  
2018-2021



Urban Agenda for the EU  
Urban Agenda for the EU

# Cultural Hubs for Innovation, Modernisation and Enhancement (CHIME)

Action 3  
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November 2021  
November 2021



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HUBS FOR INNOVATION

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## Action 3

# Cultural Hubs for Innovation, Modernisation and Enhancement (CHIME)

### *1) Who we Are*

#### *Action Leader(s)*

Municipality of Murcia (ES)

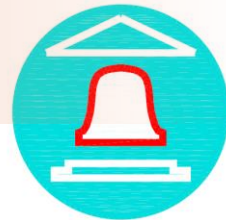
#### *Action Group Members*

Canary Islands, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (ES)

Municipality of Genoa (IT)

#### *Other bodies involved*

Murcia Public University



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## 2) Background context

*The starting point: What is/are the common problem(s) identified that the Action aims to tackle?  
Why is the Action important and relevant?*

Throughout Europe, there is a lack of physical spaces to experiment with culture creation and artistic expression. This is an issue that occurs predominantly in city centres and gentrified neighbourhoods, which is furthermore a handicap when it comes to job creation in and around the cultural and creative industries.

The ever increasing vulnerability of self-employed artists, many of whom are working in precarious conditions, is coupled with the need for space to be creative. In addition to this, they lack institutional or other regulatory framework(s) and support for entrepreneurship which further hinders their cultural output. Just like other sectors, the situation regarding COVID-19 further intensifies the struggles artists are faced with, further affecting our culture and cultural heritage.

At the same time, the lack of citizen participation, especially when working on urban regeneration, does not allow for much experimentation, even less so when regarding culture and cultural heritage. This lack has exponentially increased during COVID-19 due to many of the necessary restrictions. In addition to the lack of experimentation and cultural creations, throughout Europe, signs of cultural intolerance are on the rise. A deeper understanding of alternative and diverse cultures is required to further enrich our own culture and cultural heritage.



### 3) Objectives

#### *What were the purpose and objective of the Action?*

CHIME hubs are creative hubs that constitute a platform to strengthen artistic production and innovation, improving working conditions and promoting a structural framework for self-employed artists, granting spaces, support and feedback whilst promoting participation and transparency in cultural management, by using programmes for co-creating and managing cultural activities, activating physical spaces and boosting the local cultural and creative sector generating a supporting framework.

These Cultural Testing Tubes are to support local economy and cultural offer, creating ideas and new content, composing, designing, writing, performing, etc., in supporting self-employed artists, creators and designers in their cultural micro-enterprises, generating a creative value chain and offering tools, spaces and support/advice. These hubs test pilot projects and proposals, following the pattern of living labs with a deepened focus on citizen cultural involvement.

By implementing and generating an Urban cultural hub, local networks of economic fabric are activated, a permanent cultural network both within the city and among cities is established, culture at local level as a means to enhance local identities is promoted as is the economic development and the quality of the urban environment. In addition to this, the artists participating in residency programmes build bridges between countries and cultures, contributing to cultural diversity. Artist's 'residencies are invaluable to short-term cultural exchanges, as they permit artists to develop a deeper understanding of their host societies and cultures.



## 4) Results and main outcomes

*What were the main milestones? Which outputs and results did the Action produce? What makes the Action particularly meaningful and useful?*

To ensure the process of continuous improvement of the transversal actions/activities throughout the development of the pilot action, these were monitored and documented, evaluated and disseminated, all whilst being executed. Furthermore, in order to effectively implement the Cultural Hubs for Innovation, Modernisation and Enhancement (CHIME) Action, the creative hubs that constituted a platform and framework to strengthen artistic production and innovation were executed in three phases.

The design phase, preparation phase (local adaptation) and implementation phase, in which the CHIME took physical form in the assigned space took place consecutively. It is to be noted a CHIME Hubs can be open to any form of culture, or to specific productions, meaning a city or region can prepare and fit multiple Hubs, each with their own focus point. E.g. plastic arts, digital, audio-visual, painting, sculpture, music, dance, cinema, lighting, theatre...

The implementation of CHIME tackled the inadequacy and failures of existing cultural models, prompting a broader transformation, re-developing and improving public spaces and their governance, contributing to their funding and the generation of knowledge and know-how. The cultural testing tubes enable the self-generation of employment by accepting projects to be “tested” and providing tools, guidance and support.

The achieved milestones include, in chronological order, the definition of the core-concept, the creation of the toolkit and supporting documents e.g. valorisation of projects for acceptance in the testing tubes, house rules for the centre, and a recompilation of different development methodologies, adapted to the specific context, to guide projects through the process towards their possible outcomes.

The constitution of a physical, in this case local, CHIME Hub, election of the management team and supporting actors (panel of experts), as well as equipping the Hub with materials, Tools and Resources for the correct implementation of the concept.

The selection of projects to be assigned a testing tube, and their individual developments, leading to different outcomes, some failures, which are equally important as successes as they provide



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knowledge and know-how all the same, as well as proving some ideas, proposals or experiments do not succeed in the way they were projected.

Others, considered successful in the initial phase(s) were either considered completed and promoted (exhibited) in the city before being released to the creator (note: purchase by the city is a possibility) or moved forward, either for further elaboration as an artistic project, or in an incubator concept to be self-sustainable over time and provide a business opportunity to the creating artist.

The testing tubes are also feasible as a citizen participation and engagement tools for experimenting with citizen initiatives, although in this first implementation no call for these initiatives was launched. The requisites being the proposals adhere to the area in question, culture and cultural heritage, applied to improving the city and its neighbourhoods. Although citizens were engaged in experimentation projects to develop creative and creation skills.

The exhibitions of the results that took place can be defined as cultural events, freely open to the public and during a determined timespan. Attendance and acceptance was high, even considering some were presented with certain COVID-19 restrictions still in place.



## 5) Observations/Remarks/Recommendations

*Which recommendations (local/national/EU-level) does the Action deliver [please differentiate the different levels]? What were the important lessons learned and strategies identified to overcome the problem(s) tackled? What could be some next steps and follow-up activities (if applicable)?*

There have been considerable benefits stemming from the implementation of the action, strengthening culture experimentation and production, which enhances the cultural offer for citizens and tourists in the participating cities and regions, promoting them as a creative, dynamic, culture-generating spaces.

The benefits for artists and creatives have been clear, as this initiative provided funding and support for the local creative sector, aiding in professional development and profile raising even beyond the host city or region. Furthermore, it reinforced citizen identity and wellbeing by providing the local community with opportunities to engage with local and international artists and their work. The CHIME Hub hasn't taken in international artists for a testing tube yet, but there have been visits and engagement, building bridges for future calls.

The engagement has led to a better understanding of their local culture and cultural heritage which has been further enriched with the new understandings of the cultures of the visiting artists. Generating knowledge and know-how whilst strengthening local culture production.

The action has further confirmed that:

- There are existing initiatives for culture production and/or citizen experimentation that will not come to fruition because of a lack of local/regional support either in lack of space, resources or skills/knowledge, or a combination thereof.
- By supporting experimentation in the field of culture production at the local level, municipalities and regions gain access to new projects and initiatives, as well as laying the bases for employment creating by guiding projects in an incubator set-up.
- Different collectives of (local) culture producers shape the culture offer and are needed to establish a support structure for upcoming creators. Expert panels have proven a feasible way to involve them into the project(s).
- Experimentation in a “creative and cultural citizen lab experience” will lead to citizen engagement and participation tackling direct problems experienced in neighbourhoods, their successful completion, aid in increasing the quality of life of citizens.
- The opportunity of purchasing/renting the outcomes to add them to the cultural offer after the exhibition period is cost effective versus outsourcing.





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### Recommendations on Local and Regional Level

- Implementation of the action will provide a layer of stability to the local culture sector, that is more vulnerable than for example national or international production, as well as reinforce local economy, employment and identity.
- The road to being an independent self-employed artist or creator is hindered by a lack of means, especially in city centres, and detailed support is required to generate employment from feasible projects, which in turn generate revenue for supporting sectors.
- Spill-over of culture consumption between municipalities is determined by distance and facilities, both promotion and itinerancy can widen the area of cultural influence.
- CHIME Testing tubes permit for collaboration between different developing projects, sharing the same facilities and can generate synergies as well as hybrid collaborations.
- Support and funding as well as aid in procuring European funding for the implementation of Cultural Hubs for Innovation, Modernisation and Enhancement (CHIME Hubs), as long as they are in line with the local/regional culture model, will add to the cultural offer.

### Recommendations on National and European Level

- There is a lack of cultural interchange and exchange at the regional, national and European level for cities/regions to share and promote their local culture production, this can be mitigated by exchange programmes set up between CHIME Hubs, both for production as for exhibition. This also opens pathways for international co-creation across disciplines.
- There is a necessity to improve the accessibility of European culture production at the local/regional level.
- Specific funding is needed to create a European community of culture creating, fomenting exchange, interchange and promotion.
- Engage in a discussion at the European Level to determine the concrete causes of the precarity of creatives and artists, as a self-sustained full-time profession, apart from those already detected, and the creation of WG(s) to further the framework for diminishing the precariousness of their sector.
- The restoration of Heritage, for public use, e.g. by implementing CHIME Hubs in recovered Heritage by non-invasive means of equipping the Hub.
- Funding programmes for skill and capacity building initiatives, for citizens, professional or aspiring professionals, and civil servants related to the field.



## Outputs

- A comprehensible action implementation explanation
- FAQ and core-concept note
- Roadmap for local implementation
- A checklist for local support
- Instructions/Manual for creating a CHIME Hub
- house rules for the CHIME Hub
- Recompilation of different development methodologies
- Indicator set (KPIs)
- Good Practice Catalogue of Actions and Activities
- Online repository of audio-visual materials of action implementation
- Testimonies of coordinators and participants in Tetsting Tubes

## Additionally

- A Video of action three CHIME Hubs

**CCH Partnership Resourced Website: [Here](#)**

**Local Action Leader Website: [Here](#)**



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## Co-ordination Co-ordination

Germany

Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community

Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community

Italy

National Governmental Agency for the Territorial Cohesion

National Governmental Agency for the Territorial Cohesion

Ministry for Culture (MIC)

Ministry for Culture (MIC)

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## Official members

- Cyprus - Ministry of Interior
- France - Ministry of Culture
- Spain - Ministry of Development and Public Works
- Greece – Ministry of Culture & Sports
- Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (SI)
- Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region (PT)
- Kazanlak Municipality (BG)
- Flanders Heritage, Flemish Region (BE)
- Dutch Federation of Cultural Heritage Cities (NL)
- Katowice City Hall (PL)
- Alba Iulia Municipality (RO)
- Municipality of Nagykanizsa (HU)
- Marshal's Office of the Silesian Voivodeship (PL)
- City of Berlin (DE)
- Canary Island, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (ES)
- Bordeaux Metropole (FR)
- City of Espoo (FI)
- Jurmala City Council (LV)
- Úbeda City Council (ES)
- City of Florence (IT)
- European Commission (DGs REGIO, EAC, RTD, DEVCO, AGRI, CLIMA, JRC, SG, EASME)
- European Committee of the Regions
- European Investment Bank
- ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability
- Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage
- Eurocities
- URBACT