

CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION FORMAT ACSI SOCIETAL INNOVATION CAMPS

Challenge Name: *How to develop the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Centre in Gabrovo as a dynamic multi-stakeholder interdisciplinary production space? Focus on artists.*

GENERAL

Theme	<p>The challenge is related to the practical issues of how to build an ecosystem of stakeholders and interested parties at regional and international level for the development and operation of the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Center in Gabrovo, emulating the spirit and approach of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's working model and bring together individuals, organisations and businesses with backgrounds in art, urbanism, architecture, engineering, ecology, entrepreneurship and finance.</p> <p>We start building this multidisciplinary exercise with artistic practice at the core - both studio-based (what kind of artist studios we need to plan for in the Centre, how can artists contribute to the programming and activities) and in public space (what are the challenges to public art commissioning in Bulgaria and what is needed to overcome them).</p>
Challenge-owner and Organisation	Municipality of Gabrovo and informal initiative committee
Contact person (if different than above)	Tanya Hristova, Mayor of Gabrovo

Challenge-OWNER DESCRIPTION (background)

<p>The Christo and Jeanne-Claude Center (later referred to as CJC Center) in Gabrovo is an initiative dating 30 years, started by an informal group of intellectuals, local media, cultural and educational institutions. The dedication to the cause by the local authorities in Gabrovo has been reaffirmed throughout the years through the sanction of multiple decisions and actions, both by the Municipality and the City Council.</p> <p>Currently the project for the development of the Center is led by Gabrovo Municipality as owner of the building and warrant of the public interest, however, there is a clear understanding for the need of maintaining the spirit of collaboration, co-production and exchange of social energies and ideas.</p>
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BACKGROUND/CONTEXT of the Challenge

<p>The Center will be developed through an open ended and open source process, based on interdisciplinary approach and mix of competences, as a place for collaboration beyond disciplines and boundaries between artists, urban planners, environmentalists, engineers, industrialists, financiers and scientists, involving experts from different fields, essential for the realization of the complex projects of Christo and Jeanne Claude.</p> <p>The Center will apply approaches inherent to a creative laboratory based on cross-sectoral solutions and innovative research and educational tools to address issues of public importance. It will support art and ideas that invite us to go beyond the known, rethink the possible and explore new ways of understanding ourselves, each other and the world around us.</p> <p>The project team, led by the Mayor of Gabrovo, mixes diverse expertise and has shared understanding about the need for a systems based approach to deliver a sustainable physical space and an institution that offers experience but above all provides for collaborative production - of knowledge, art, and interdisciplinary projects.</p> <p>The CJC Center is a strategic regional project in the Plan for Integrated Development of Gabrovo (through 2027) and is listed by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Regional Development as a strategic cultural investment project for the ongoing programme period. It is expected to constitute an exemplary contribution to the NEB initiative with a view to bringing the European Green Deal closer to people's minds and making tangible the comfort and attractiveness of sustainable living and working. It is a great opportunity for the city to address its demographic downfall through increased quality of life and attracting new talent.</p> <p>The project will have a major cultural and economic contribution at regional and national level, through developing the art scene in the North Central region, supporting the work and cooperation between artists, researchers, and engineers. It brings together different types of creativity, marrying the strong industrial and engineering profile of the city to contemporary art and culture. The CJC Center will have a major impact on tourism and will strengthen local pride through positioning Gabrovo on the international contemporary art map.</p>
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DESCRIPTION OF MAIN ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES and OBSTACLES

Main Issues

- securing broad local engagement, national and international engagement and creating strong and sustainable links between all levels
- developing a sustainable production space, bringing together diverse disciplines and backgrounds, mixing up scholars, artists, business and tinkerers
- creating a platform, which can improve the cultural field by focusing on problem solving based on research, development, prototyping and testing (i.e. art in the public domain)

Underlying Issues

The culture-led development approach is particularly adequate for abandoned buildings and sites and for rekindling the social ties in cities of small and medium size. In that sense we are dealing with needs, assets and liabilities, which are not unique to Gabrovo. The idea and approach behind the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Center planning is strongly based on the genius loci of Gabrovo and its cultural legacy (Christo, the textile industry, engineering).

Opportunities

Alongside humor, crafts, and industrial heritage, Christo is a strong element of the local identity and city brand and it is the most contemporary one, providing for living in the present and dreaming for the future.

Bringing together different disciplines in dialogue and collaboration provides for developing diverse art and culture projects of social significance.

Obstacles

Gabrovo has been more and more often recognized as a town offering high quality of life and has recently (during the pandemic) been attracting younger talent. However, the main development challenge for the town remains demographics. Hence, the development of the Center may meet challenges in terms of engaging experts and collaborators. Yet this is also a great opportunity for the Center to be part of challenging the demographic downfall.

MAIN CHALLENGE OBJECTIVES

2 or 3 bullet point sentences describing each objective. Describe in more detail if necessary.

- defining types of activities
- defining thematic areas and stakeholders type
- developing models of collaboration and engagement
- developing a roadmap for commissioning art in public space and mapping potential partners and participants

Relevant Stakeholders and stakeholder organisations

- artists
- architects and urbanists
- curators, Christo and Jeanne-Claude project collaborators

Background documents for the participants in our group (investigate further):

<https://christojeanneclaude.net/>

<https://c.ramboll.com/local-support-new-european-bauhaus>

<https://segabg.com/category-culture/kristo-se-zavrushta-gabrovo>

<https://www.facebook.com/CJcexhibitionGabrovo>