JOURNAL

PROJECT

Kosice 2.0
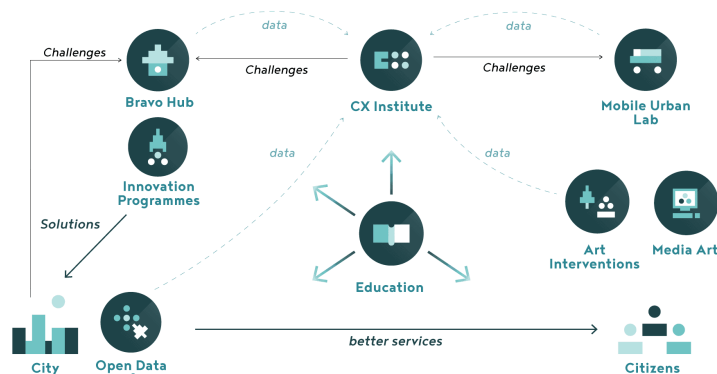
📍 KoŠice, Slovakia

TOPIC

Culture and cultural heritage

EDIT 25 NOVEMBER 2021
BY HARIS BISKOS UIA
EXPERT

Kosice 2.0 Journal 1: Hitting the ground running

See on UIA website

The Kosice 2.0 project capitalizes on the ongoing culture-led transformation dynamics in the city of Kosice to increase citizens' wellbeing while reinforcing public sector innovation, increasing civic participation and supporting the restructuring process of the economy. At the heart of Kosice 2.0 project lies the Citizens Experience and Wellbeing Institute (CXI) that helps the City acquire a strong data culture to policy-making and a citizen-centric approach to public governance. The CXI develops a system to collect data related to several dimensions of the urban life, process them, makes them available to the wider community, helps the municipality to design evidence based policies advancing public sector performance and supports the local ecosystem of startups to address urban challenges in the city increasing their competitiveness. Kosice 2.0 aims to modernize public service provision, digitize and open up data and information hidden behind bureaucratic processes, increase citizens' participation in cultural activities, nurture city's collective intelligence, support a new generation of entrepreneurs and ultimately help Kosice to reach its next development stage in an knowledge intensive era becoming a truly creative city. The first journal report for Kosice 2.0 project brings forward the knowledge and lessons learned from the first year of its implementation as well as the challenges that have been faced when leading an innovation program on culture and cultural heritage that envisages to bring systemic changes to city governance and impact well-being. This journal will reflect on the first steps of the implementation phase and the team's challenges while unveiling the larger context, vision and the story behind the initiative.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kosice city is currently a living laboratory that performs as a testbed to explore the capacity and dynamics of culture, the creative sector and contemporary cultural heritage to shape its development trajectory and urban transformation process. This open living lab context brings forward a young generation of open-minded and ambitious city leaders and capitalizes on the knowledge spillovers between the creative and IT sector to drive the way towards urban prosperity and build linkages between culture, technology, entrepreneurship, urban development and the public sector. Within only a decade, Kosice managed to turn from a city struggling with a shrinking industrial employment and unclear future, to a vibrant place with an ambitious creative economy that taps on the power of culture and technology to impact spatial development and public sector innovation. Starting point and major driver for this broader change has been the nomination of the city as a European Capital of Culture in 2013 that triggered a social and economic re-structuring and brought about a new vision for how the

city should look like[1].

Kosice 2.0 is today the frontrunner of this larger vision that aims to capitalize on the ongoing cultural-led transformation to ignite the upgrade of the city's urban experience, improve public service provision and ultimately to increase wellbeing putting the participation of citizens, the creative community and the community of start-ups at the center. Kosice 2.0 interlinks culture to public decision making processes, public sector innovation, economic resilience, urban transformation and happiness while introducing a human-centric approach to the way the city takes its decisions. It thus helps the City of Kosice to orient its work in a way that its residents can intuitively understand, and to measure the impact of its policies and actions in a more meaningful way for the life of its citizens.

The project develops an interface that interacts in multiple dimensions with the city wider stakeholder ecosystem and pivots around a central element called the Citizens Experience and Wellbeing Institute (CXI). The CXI, positioned within the corporate structure of the City's spin off company and legacy organization of European Capital of Culture 2013 CIKE (Creative Industry Kosice)[2], collects data related to several dimensions of its urban experience, process them, makes them available to the wider community showcasing them in public spaces through art installations, supports with them the local ecosystem of startups to address urban challenges in the city and to increase their competitiveness and provides policy recommendations to the municipality that help deliver better services and develop evidence based policies that improve the quality of life of its citizens. The CXI consists of a team of urban experts, an open data platform that will be incorporated to the City routines and a mobile urban lab unit that plugs into different places in the city collecting data while triggering the engagement of citizens around neighborhood needs and future development ideas feeding continuously the CXI facility.

A center dedicated to urban innovation (the Urban Innovation Sphere/UIS) complements the CXI with the mission to ignite the participation of the community (citizens, entrepreneurs, artists, creative start-ups, policy-makers, city officials) to the development of urban innovations that tackle pressing challenges that the city is facing. The UIS mentors and supports startups, provides micro-grants to creative entrepreneurs, awards and tests prototypes submitted by citizens' collectives and provides a platform for networking opportunities for the community of artist and entrepreneurs. It makes use of evidence and data provided by the CXI for the range of its activities and it is extracting products and services that could inspire or improve the performance of public sector.

To help better integrate the use of data into the culture of decision making and also further support the wider community embed the notion of data driven solutions, the project develops and educational program supervised by the CXI and the Technical University of Kosice (TUKE) with training activities and modules for both the City's permanent staff and higher education University level.

Major part of the funding will be invested to further upgrade Kosice's Culture Park buildings (Kulturpark/Kasárne), former barracks structures that have been initially renovated for the European Capital of Culture in 2013, to host the CXI and the UIS. Those spaces will be transformed into a vibrant start-up hub with co-working facilities, a Fab Lab, audiovisual center, atelier and a large meet up area for the target community.

The first journal report for Kosice 2.0 project brings forward the knowledge and lessons learned from the first year of its implementation as well as the challenges that have been faced when leading an innovation program on culture and cultural heritage that envisages to bring systemic changes to city governance and impact well-being. This journal will reflect on the first steps of the implementation phase and the team's challenges while unveiling the larger context, vision and the story behind the initiative.

PARTNER	ROLE
City of Kosice	Lead Urban Authority
Creative Industry Kosice (CIKE)	City spin-off company (NGO) and program coordinator.

K13-Kosice Cultural Centres	City spin-off company, responsible for the management of the cultural premises.
East Coast	Community organization that links with local communities and civil society.
Technical University of Kosice	Faculty of Economics - Department of Regional Science and Managment, Faculty of Arts - Department of Architecture. Research partner that leads part of the educational program.
Kosice IT Valley	The largest association of IT companies in East Slovakia.
ANTIK Telecom	Private SME responsible to integrate technological solutions.
Civitta Slovakia	Private SME expert in startup acceleration and innovation services. It is responsible for design and delivery of the Urban Innovation Accelerator.
ASBIS SK	Private enterprise contributing with digital solutions for the open data platform and the media installations.

[1] source: Hudec, Remoaldo, Urbancˇíková, Ribeiro, "Stepping Out of the Shadows: Legacy of the European Capitals of Culture, Guimarães 2012 and Košice 2013", Published: 10 March 2019

[2] CIKE starts in 2007 as a mission-based team working under the municipality of Kosice preparing its candidacy for the European Capital of Culture 2013. After the successful entry, the public non-profit organization Košice 2013 – European Capital of Culture was founded to deliver the organization of the ECoC 2013. In September 2015, it was renamed Creative Industry Košice NGO and it has been working for the City delivering projects in the field of CCIs. Source: https://www.cike.sk/

2. SETTING THE SCENE

2.1 Urban challenges and opportunities

Regional Context

Kosice is the second largest city of the Slovak Republic with a population of 236.563 inhabitants, almost half the population of the capital city Bratislava (423.737 inhabitants) and more than double than the third city Presov with 94,718 inhabitants[1]. While capital Bratislava ranks among top 20% of OECD metropolitan areas of more than 500.000 inhabitants in terms of GDP per capita growth since 2000, the rest of Slovak cities and regions, and especially Kosice region, are falling short in economic prosperity and well being.

The differences in GDP per capita across the small self-governing regions (Kraj) in the Slovak Republic have increased since 2000. Faster growth in the country's richest region, Bratislava, has widened the gap to the Eastern part[2] with its GDP per capita (35.789 Euros GDP/capita) being almost 3.3 times higher than the one of the Eastern Slovakia (11.753 Euros GDP/capita). In 2018, the Slovak Republic is among the OECD countries with the highest regional economic disparities and this means that the regions' opportunities to realize their internal development

potential is at risk[3].
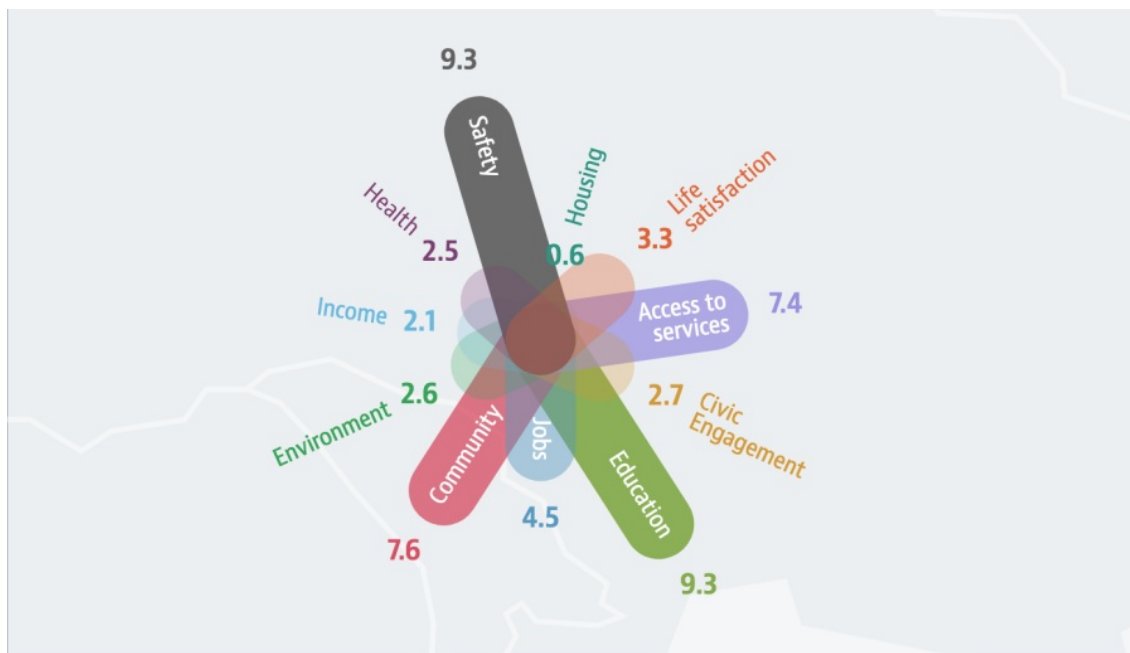
The well-being index in the Eastern Slovak Region according to OECD

Economic prosperity gap is also reflected in the well-being index of Slovak regions. Slovakia is divided into 4 large territories (regions under the NUTS 2 classification), the Bratislava region, Western Slovakia, Central Slovakia and Eastern Slovakia. Kosice is the capital and largest city of the Eastern Slovakia region, which is one of the poorest areas of the country. According to the OECD better life index, Eastern region ranks at the bottom in 5 out of the 11 well-being indicators when compared to the other 3 Slovak regions and especially to Bratislava that tops 8 of the 11 categories. Eastern Slovakia region scores at the bottom 20% for jobs (unemployment rater of 9,1% while Bratislava has 3,1%), income (13.230 Euros GDP/capita while Bratislava 21.685 GDP/per capita), education (87,8% population with at least upper secondary education while in Bratislava is 94,7%) and civic engagement (55,1% voters in the national elections while in Bratislava is 64,3%). Eastern region also scores quite low in areas of life satisfaction (3,3 points out of 10 - bottom 22% of all OECD regions), environment (the average level of PM2.5 equals 19.9 µg/m³ - bottom 17% of all OECD regions) and health (life expectancy 77,2 and mortality rate 10,1 deaths/thousand people - bottom 17% of all OECD regions)[4]. Strong areas for Eastern region are only its safety (at the top 39% of all OECD regions) and the access to services (82% broadband access - top 37% of all OECD regions)[5].
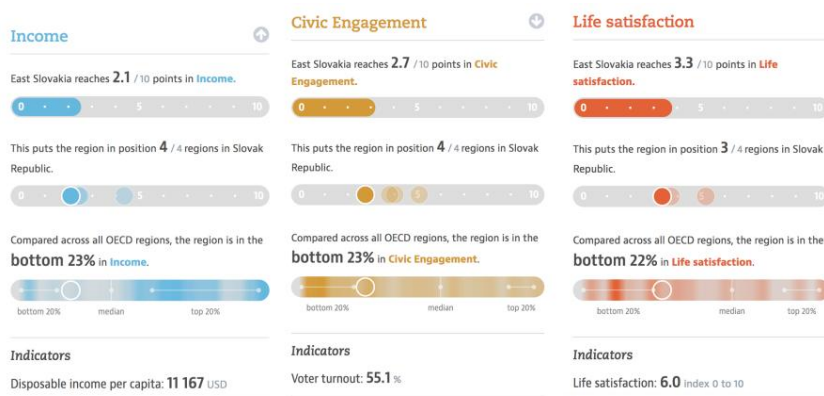
Eastern Slovak Region's well-being index scores low in terms of income, civic engagement and life satisfaction.

Major societal challenges faced today

Economic insecurity and low levels of well-being indicators and life satisfaction are well connected to the important societal and economic changes that the city has experienced in its post—Soviet era. In the modern history, Eastern Slovak region economy has been heavily industrial. The state-run metallurgic complex of the East Slovak Ironworks that was built in the outskirts of Kosice in 1959 during the Soviet regime brought thousands of

jobs to the greater region and led the rapid urbanization process for Kosice that witnessed population growth from 70.000 (1930's) to 150.000 (1970's) to 240.000 (2016). The plant counted 20-30,000 employees in its peak period, and contributed to the modernization, reconstruction and infrastructure development of Kosice. After privatization by the American company US Steel in 2000, employment in steelworks fell below 10,000 in 2016 and continues to have a downward trend affecting the society of Kosice region at large[6].

US Steel Kosice has been the city's major economic driver.

At the same time a pressure to the economic viability of the city has been created, as a high number of jobs are at risk of automation at a national level. According to OECD Economic Survey 2019 on Slovakia and the Report on Slovakia's Cities and Regions at Glance 2020, almost two-thirds of current jobs in Slovakia are at risk of automation[7] which is the highest number among EU countries while between 2000 and 2017, all large regions in the Slovak Republic experienced a decline in the share of manufacturing employment. The unemployment rate in Kosice Region at the end of April 2021 reached 12.73% which is the second highest unemployment rate in Slovakia. The newly emerging IT sector that has generated over 10.000 new jobs in 2017 is an opportunity but is not yet big enough to absorb this challenge.

High unemployment rates and economic uncertainty are definitely drivers of peoples' mistrust to public government and the authorities. Based on the OECD better life index, Eastern Slovak region reaches 2,7/10 points in civic engagement index with the lowest voters turnout percentage in last elections, 55,1%, among Slovak regions. Eastern region is at the bottom 20% in civic engagement when compared to the rest of the country and at the bottom 23% when compared across all OECD regions.

Culture as major driver for the city's new long-term vision

At the turn of the century, and as the city had been going through this steady de-industrialization process that brought along important societal challenges, a key moment ignited a new era for Kosice in its contemporary post-Soviet history and this has been the nomination of the city as a European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in 2013. This prestigious title brought to Kosice new opportunities to re-shape its image, gain the self-confidence and attract international visibility while helped the city formulate a new long-term vision that capitalizes on culture as an element that can help the city grow and develop.[8]

A new culture park was created for the European Capital of Culture after the reconstruction of the old Hungarian army barracks.

In total, around €70 million were invested into upgrading the city with cultural infrastructure, such as new cultural venues and organizations, which continue operating and providing cultural programs. Based on a recent study by the Technical University of Kosice, the impact coefficient of the European Capital of Culture was 1.65 which means that every Euro invested brought €1.65 back into the economy of the city[9].

Culture and creativity brought also a new dynamism and were seen as key elements for economic development as well as for reinforcing the image of the city with straight impact to the life of its inhabitants and enhancing community pride. The ECoC 2013 was great motivation to get out of the shadow of Bratislava and to show the power of the city as a strong independent European metropolis[10].

A new vibrant city on the making

ECoC triggered a shift towards information economy that also affected the urban identity of the place at large. As Kosice witnessed the emergence of a strong information technology (IT) sector in the place of the heavily industrial based economy providing over 10.000 jobs in 2017, it has attracted a younger generation into the city changing the quality of the place. A new creative community emerged shaping an open-minded environment, a vibrant city life and an urban experience that combines programmatic diversity and hybridity with attractive buildings, urban parks, cinemas, co-working facilities etc[11]. Thanks to the strong ICT sector and the young, vibrant creative community, Kosice is becoming a hotspot for media arts that has also brought to the city another prestigious award, which is the UNESCO City of Media Arts in 2017.

Kosice as a hotspot for media arts.

How does Kosice 2.0 project capitalizes on city's opportunities to address its challenges

Kosice City leadership knows quite well that a great strategy when facing emerging complex societal challenges is to tap on the major resources and opportunities found in the city itself. In this direction, Kosice 2.0 project taps on the contemporary cultural shift of the city and the emergence of a strong information technology (IT) sector to help face major overarching challenges directly linked to the well being as those have been stated above:

- Economic transformation and insecurity.

- Low level of well-being and life satisfaction.

- Lack of trust to public institutions.

- Limited participation to cultural activities by the broader community, which is connected to low awareness of the potential of culture and the creative industries to bring greater impact to the quality of life and economic viability of the city.

Kosice 2.0 project channels the power of culture and contemporary cultural heritage to bring systemic changes to the ways the City takes its decisions and designs its services to improve the quality of life and the well being of its citizens. The development of the Citizens Experience and Wellbeing Institute (CXI) works in this direction as it creates an infrastructure to help the City take better decisions and design evidence based policies while coming closer to its citizens and reinforcing the capacity of the community to produce innovation. Making use of the contemporary cultural infrastructure such as the Bravo Hub building in the Kasarne Culture Park or the community spaces SPOTS, it creates a network of places where community can engage, interact with City leadership and have a say to the urban transformation processes of the city. At the same time, through meticulously designed components such as the Urban Innovation Sphere, Kosice 2.0 project transforms existing cultural infrastructure to a vibrant urban lab and through this lab it engages with the wider community of start-ups, creative professionals, IT sector and citizens to foster innovation and increase the competitiveness of large corporations by creating linkages among them.

[1] source:https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cities/slovakia

[2] source: OECD https://search.oecd.org/cfe/Slovak-Republic-Regions-and-Cities-2020.pdf

[3] source: https://search.oecd.org/cfe/Slovak-Republic-Regions-and-Cities-2020.pdf

[4] source: ibid

[5] source: https://www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org/SK04.html

[6] source: Hudec, Remoaldo, Urbancˇíková, Ribeiro, "Stepping Out of the Shadows: Legacy of the European Capitals of Culture, Guimarães 2012 and KoŠice 2013", Published: 10 March 2019

[7] Source: https://www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/Slovak-Republic-2019-OECD-economic-survey-overview.pdf

[8] source: https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22289761/the-european-capital-of-culture-title-gave-kosice-the-courage-to-think-big.html

[9] source: Ibid

[10] source: Hudec, Remoaldo, Urbancˇíková, Ribeiro, "Stepping Out of the Shadows: Legacy of the European Capitals of Culture, Guimarães 2012 and KoŠice 2013", Published: 10 March 2019

[11] source: Ibid

2.2 Policy Context

The European framework

The European Commission identifies culture together with the creative sector and cultural heritage to have the power to strengthen people's well-being and thus be major drivers in our societies that generate positive impact beyond their traditional boundaries. They have the ability to contribute substantially to social cohesion and fair economic growth; create new jobs; increase participation and active citizenship; help generate the sense of belonging in our societies bringing people closer; strengthen the European identity offering a vision for an attractive European Union. Culture and creative sector can also boost innovation and entrepreneurship as they are able to provide conditions for innovative solutions to emerge that can tackle contemporary societal challenges while inspire new business ideas inside or outside the creative sector. They can also bring change to spatial development giving breathing new life into areas in decline or giving new impetus to urban planning. As the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage under the EU Urban Agenda states in its orientation paper, "Culture is everywhere"[1].

Despite the importance of culture and cultural heritage, Eurostat data show that only 30% of Europeans are engaging regularly with cultural sites or events while more than a third of Europeans do not participate at all in any cultural activities. Furthermore the share of cultural employment is 3.8% of total employment in the EU-28 which is equivalent to agriculture, forestry and fishing sector while no increase was observed in relative terms in cultural employment between 2013 and 2018[2].

To face those challenges and harness the opportunities of culture, the European Commission has recently introduced the New European Agenda for Culture that aims to consolidate the role of culture to help face complex and urgent societal challenges among the EU member states. Among its strategic objectives are to enhance the relevance of culture in European cities, harness the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion, bring people together through cultural participation, support culture-based creativity in education and innovation, and preserve the quality of culture and cultural heritage at local level as a means to promote sound, long-term, sustainable, local urban development and increase well-being[3].

The EU has also set a number of policy actions through the work plans for culture. The Work Plan for Culture (2019-2022), adopted in November 2018, set out five key priorities — sustainability and cultural heritage, cohesion and well-being, an ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content, gender equality, and international cultural relations[4].

Kosice 2.0 project is clearly aligned with all of the above EU priorities on culture and its policy directions at many levels. The most notable connection of the project with the new EU policies framework is the identification of culture and cultural heritage as powerful resources to improve well being and shape the development trajectory of the city. At the same time Kosice 2.0 relates culture to innovation and entrepreneurship but also taps on

culture and cultural heritage to help increase civic participation and increase social cohesion.

Regional and local policy context

Being a project that aims in reinforcing the restructuring process of the economy of the city by fostering innovation and increasing the competitiveness of start-ups, Kosice 2.0 is very much connected to the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization of the Slovan Republic. This policy document is an effort to drive structural changes to the Slovak economy towards growth and is based on increasing innovation capability and R&I excellence and promote sustainable growth in income, employment and standard of living. Kosice 2.0 is clearly aligned with the national framework supporting objectives such as Strategic objective 3 to create a dynamic, open and inclusive innovative society as one of the preconditions for an increase in the standard of living. In this direction the Strategy pushes forward partial objectives such as creating conditions for enterprises (especially SMEs) to increase their innovation capacities or the support for the implementation of various kinds of innovations into practice for the needs of society[5].

In terms of the regional policy framework, Kosice 2.0 is closely aligned with Kosice Region's Program of Economic and Social Development 2016-22 that promotes the need for economic diversification and makes use of innovation and creative potential of the region as the highest priority. Kosice 2.0 enables synergies and further expands the Programs' emphasis on the establishment of creative and entrepreneurship centers and ties the newly created UIS to cultural heritage and the concept of citizen experience.

Furthermore, Kosice 2.0 project taps on the Creative Economy Master Plan (Ko**š**ice 2020) that aims to create jobs, help businesses to grow and improve wellbeing by unlocking the potential of the Creative Industries to grow, diversify and invigorate the economy for the city and the wider region. Kosice 2.0 emphasizes on the creative infrastructure (UIS), creative education (Dare to Create) and linking citizen-centric approach to policy-making, thus further stimulating the growth of the creative economy[6].

The goals of the project are also in line with the objectives of the Development Program of Ko**š**ice 2015-2020 that specifies (1) the need to diversify the local economy and increase the number of creative industry subjects and (2) simplify governance and decision-making processes utilizing digital technologies.

The project significantly expands on the objectives and goals of the European Capital of Culture 2013 and the entry of Kosice entitles "The Interface" project as it positions contemporary cultural heritage, digital technologies, new media arts and art installations at the center of the city's interface with citizens. It also capitalizes and expands the Urbact's Creative Spin project with Kosice's participation in 2013 that develops tools and methods to trigger creativity and innovation in public and private organizations by encouraging artists, creative professionals, cultural institutions and industries to engage with other sectors to share their competencies and skills[7].

Finally Kosice 2.0 complements other local initiatives that have acquired visibility in the city as the result of this culture-led transformation such as the existing Tabacka Kulturfabrik, an industrial renovated tobacco factory that has been transformed into a vibrant place with co-working spaces, studios etc. as a result from a strong civic participation process.

---

[1] source: https://ec.europa.eu/culture/document/new-european-agenda-culture-swd2018-267-final

[2] source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-statistical-books/-/KS-01-19-712

[3] source: source:https://ec.europa.eu/culture/document/new-european-agenda-culture-swd2018-267-final

[4] source: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018XG1221(01)

[5] source: https://www.opvai.sk/media/57255/through-knowledge-towards-prosperity-research-and-innovation-strategy-for-smart-specialisation-of-the-slovak-republic.pdf

[6] source: https://www.cike.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/masterplanen-web1.pdf

[7] source: https://urbact.eu/creative-spin

2.3 Where does the project stand today

The Hackathon competition has been one of the major moments of the Urban Innovation Sphere. | © Kosice 2.0

Today, 10 months after the official program kick-off meeting, Kosice 2.0 has managed to activate all of its major pillars and has been moving quite steadily in the implementation process despite obstacles emerging from pandemic and delays or minor changes of plans along the way. All preparations regarding the setting up of the management structure and the formulation of the project management team have been completed on time without delays. The Citizens Experience and Wellbeing Institute has been formulated, positioned at the moment within the corporate structure of CIKE, and has been working as a functional unit with its urban experts onboard and office equipment. There is more work to be done in terms of human resources hiring more staff, which is needed, but the CXI office is at the moment running smoothly. Despite the slight delays in the procurement process for its special equipment, the Mobile Urban Lab, part of the CXI, has been active already (without the car) having organized community events engaging with the local communities into a series of participatory planning meetings about the future of green spaces.

The Mobile Urban Lab unit has been engaging with citizens' communities for the priorities of the city. | © Kosice 2.0

The Urban Innovation Sphere has been also set up and running in the premises of the Bravo Hub building hub in Kulturpark. The co-working facility has been fully populated by tenants despite the fact that its infrastructure is not there yet as the project has been experiencing delays or changes of plans in the procurement process. All the programs of the UIS (Accelerator Program, Proof of Concept, Hackathons) have already completed their first cycle while the Networking Catalyst Program for start-ups has already organized 7 online digital thematic events. Despite the delays and limitations brought by the pandemic spread, the program has managed to organize a multiplicity of events digitally or physically such as thematic meet ups, seminars, urban talks with Mayors while it has developed a vibrant and affluent in material project website.

Finally, the educational program for students, Creative University, has been incorporated to the TUKE University structure and has started delivering classes while the Creative City educational program for City Officials has also been launched with 20 people participating in the first cycle.

3. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Challenge	Observation

01. Leadership

Challenge level ●

Kosice 2.0 enjoys today strong political support by the leadership of the City government. The prestigious character of the program as well the acknowledged and reliable public organization CIKE that is responsible for the project management and delivers on time ensure equilibrium in the leadership of the project. Local elections that are on the way this season do not put pressure to Kosice 2.0.

Kosice 2.0 is moving forward with confidence as it enjoys strong political support by the leadership of the City government. City of Kosice leads the project by bearing the overall supervision of the implementation with a Vice Mayor and the Head of the Strategic Department onboard. Two City-owned spin-off companies, legacies of the European Capital of Culture, are carrying the load of the project management and program's leadership. Creative Industry Kosice (CIKE), expert in the field of the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs) is responsible for the management and coordination of the partnership as well as for the development of the major deliverable CXI that is positioned within its corporate structure and its sibling, K13, is responsible for the management of the infrastructure, co-working spaces, venues, events undertaking most of project's public procurement processes. One higher education and research public institute, Technical University of Kosice is active in the educational program and supports M&E and research at CXI. One community organization, East Coast, undertakes the engagement activities of the Mobile Urban Lab and runs participatory workshops and community events bringing citizens and communities closer to the project. Kosice IT Valley, the association of IT companies and important stakeholder of the economic transformation of the region, with 53 members such as Deutsche Telecom, Siemens but also municipalities of Kosice and Presov, Kosice self-governing region and Technical University, supports with its network the development of the open data platform and the implementation of hackathons. One major innovation hub with international activity, Civitta Slovakia leads the urban innovation accelerator program while 2 private companies provide support with IT and digital solutions for the implementation of major deliverables.

An acknowledged and reliable project leadership
Three big public partners (City of Kosice, CIKE and K13-Kosice Cultural Centres) share the program's management responsibilities and the personal costs for the core management team. CIKE, which is responsible for the overall coordination of the day-to-day management and production of content, has been the partner that also led the design process of the project proposal and the frontrunner of the City's cultural-led transformation plan. CIKE, as well as its sibling K13-Kosice Cultural Centres, have their own legal status and staff and are supervised by a public board led by the City of Kosice. A group of young and ambitious creative leaders and city makers manage both public organizations. Having a solid leadership model with 3 major public partners, the project enjoys today political support and local elections that are on the way this season do not seem to create pressure to the team.

Sharing common objectives
Goals of Kosice 2.0 are aligned with the long term strategic objectives of the City to increase the diversity of the economy capitalising on the creative industry and investing in digital technologies to advance public service provision and bring efficiency to the decision making processes. All project partners support those objectives and this creates strong commitment to the project vision. Both public authorities and project partners work together for a broader vision for the city.

Political leadership next to the project
During the first year of implementation the appointed political leadership with the Vice Mayor and the Head of the Strategic Department of the municipality has been quite close to the project when it came for its most important moments but also helping connect the initiative with City services departments or facilitating the

opening of the educational program for City Officials.

take away points:

- Institutionalizing best practices can become key when nurturing innovation. City of Kosice exploited the legacy of the European Capital of Culture turning its lever public company to fully functional contemporary public cultural organizations that enjoy political support while having strong experience running such a complex project

- Diffused form of leadership is key to create commitment and motivation and hybrid public entities that acquire a sense of independence can become key in this model. Strategic vision should be clearly shared among public authorities and project partners to help create equilibrium in leadership

02. Public Procurement

Challenge level ●

Public procurement for equipment and external services is quite generous in Kosice 2.0 and covers 37% of the total budget. Those funds are allocated for the upgrade of physical cultural infrastructure, the development of new innovative elements (Mobile Urban Lab and open data platform) and also to nurture opportunities for the ecosystem of start-ups with seed funding investment. While public procurement is well designed and run by experienced public entities, delays have been encountered to almost all areas without though excessing the limits.

In Kosice 2.0 public procurement for equipment and external services is quite generous and covers 37% of the total project budget (more than 2mil. Euros). Most of the procurement load is carried by the City and its entities, CIKE and K13-Kosice Cultural Centres and consists of 3 main strands:

- The upgrade/reconstruction of physical cultural infrastructure (building spaces) that have been previously used for purely cultural purpose during the ECoC 2013 providing 4.500 sq.m to offices, co-working facility and the Urban Innovation Sphere to support the start-up ecosystem. Despite the fact that the building (part of the Culture Park creative space) was renovated for the ECoC in 2013, Kosice 2.0 allocates additional investment into further upgrade for ventilation system, electronic installation, equipment and furniture transforming the space previously used for exhibitions to a vibrant lab that hosts the Urban Innovation Sphere, co-working space for start-ups, FabLab, Audio-Visual Centre, Atelier and Community Meet-Up Space (EUR 0.6 million).

- The development of the Mobile Urban Laboratory (MUL) as an integral part of CXI and instrumental in achieving the objectives of the project (collecting data and engaging with communities). Procurement will include the car/trailer, interior custom design and equipment with extensive light and sound visual media art display, as well as with sensory technology for the purpose of data collection and mapping. (EUR 0.3 million).

- The support of entrepreneurs, artists, creative professionals and civil society organizations with micro-funding and grants through the Urban Innovation Sphere (UIS). The UIS will run 3 different grant schemes: The first is part of the Urban Innovation Accelerator program that will finance in total 3 early-stage start-ups with EUR 10.000 each (EUR 30.000 in total). The second is the Proof of Concept grant scheme that will finance 12 promising ideas per year from civil society organizations with EUR 5.000 each (EUR 180.000 in total). The third is the Open Innovation Initiative that will award 9 citizen-centric innovations focused on tech solutions with EUR 5.000 (EUR 45.000 in total) - (EUR 0.25 million)

Meticulous preparation phases
Investing in developing new innovative infrastructures such as the Mobile Urban Lab

or upgrading existing ones with state of the art equipment, such as renovating the Bravo building, undertaking costs associated with physical reconstructions and specialized technical equipment could lead to sidetrack in timelines and pre-calculated costs. To mitigate those risks project partners CIKE and K13-Kosice Cultural Centres are investing in combining highly specialized staff and internal procurement managers with experts to run meticulously and accurately the process specifying scope and criteria to meet the exact needs of the procurement each time.

Facing delays along the way
During the first year of implementation a number of delays occurred for all the 3 strands of the procurement process. Some of those delays happened because of administrative lags, some others because of deadlocks in the process that led to change of plans, others because of pandemic context and others because a new idea was introduced to better meet the needs of the activity.

- The upgrade of the Bravo building with low energy consumption HVAC system and electrical installation has delayed for about 5 months already partly due to administrative delays, obstacles related to the pandemic as during the 1st pandemic wave, the Main building of Kasárne was one of the main regional spots for the Covid-19 testing (which was also obligatory), but also because the team decided to invest more time in the preparation process so to help end up with the appropriate solutions of service providers. Today, after a carefully designed preparation phase, service providers have been selected and the works are expected to start very soon.

- The process of furnishing and equipping the Urban Innovation Sphere and the co-working facility has also faced delays. Furnishing the co-working facility has undergone through the same route as the HVAC system with a careful preparation phase. Today the public competition has been completed and the service provider is about to be announced. The project team has not though been waiting for the new furniture to arrive and has already offered access to the new tenants to use the co-working space, which has been 100%, occupied. To overcome the problem they have used temporary solutions allowing tenants to bring their own equipment that could also share with their colleagues. A dedicated space in the basement of the building is being used to store redundant items that could be used in special circumstances. This more collaborative approach has been also the case for designing the specifications of the supportive facilities such as the FabLab, community meet up space and Atelier. Instead of planning those spaces in advance, the team decided to carefully collect the needs of the new tenants using questionnaires that helped define better specification of spaces and let the tenants acquire a sense of co-ownership. Today 80% of the equipment is expected to be installed by the end of the year (except the equipment for the FabLab facility that will take longer). Delays due to the pandemic were caused as tenants arrived later than planned.

- The Mobile Urban Lab unit has been also facing a number of delays associated with the car/trailer customization and the highly specialized equipment provision. The development of the car has delayed for 5 months already mainly because of difficulties acquiring the necessary state-of-the-art equipment. The sensory technology for the purpose of data collection and mapping has turned out to be much more complicated to acquire than planned and it turned out to be also very expensive and that has created a small deadlock as far as the vehicle is concerned. The team has though devised alternative solutions so not to slow down the activities of the MUL launching the program without the use of the car, engaging with the community in a series of participatory planning meetings that took place at the network of the community spaces SPOTS that are activated for the needs of the project.

- The project management team had to implement minor change of plans for the Proof of Concept grant scheme program of the Urban Innovation Sphere. The grant scheme initially aimed to support citizen-centric innovations coming from civil society organizations or citizens (individuals with no corporate

formal status). Due to Slovak legislative processes, the City of Kosice could not provide the grant for individuals. The team had to adapt keeping the grant scheme running for organizations from the civil society.

take away points:

- Devising temporary solutions to overcome delays during public procurement helps the project not loose its flow and dynamics in implementation

- Changing plans to a more participative approach to public procurement could be tested for a part of the project as this could bring co-ownership to final result

03. Organizational arrangements within the urban authority/cross department working

Challenge level 🟠

The project uses a compact and swift project management model where one public organization (CIKE) with high reputation and major experience undertakes project direction. While this has turned out to be very efficient for the implementation process and for achieving project goals and deliver on time in a challenging period, it does create pressure to a small team that carries most of the workload, responsibility and risk. A strong common vision, culture and enthusiasm among all partners of the project facilitates cohesion and consistency while important moments such as the launch of the Urban Innovation Sphere have helped to achieve cross-partnership diffuse of responsibilities/risks/rewards and add up to a more participative way of project management.

Kosice 2.0 operates with a compact and swift project management and coordination mechanism. Municipality has the role of the supervisor and supports politically helping to overcome deadlocks during the implementation while advocates for the project at a higher level. The management and project coordination (project direction) is the responsibility of its public entity, CIKE with the support of its sibling K13-Kosice Cultural Centres. All project partners are participating in the steering committee taking strategic decisions, they meet every 6 months and their role to the implementation depends on the working packages or deliverables where they lead or contribute according to the expertise they bring to the partnership.

Two experienced sibling public entities as the trustees of the project management

CIKE and K13-Kosice Cultural Centres are City organizations that draw their expertise from running major cultural initiatives for the City of Kosice being the agents of the cultural-led transformation of the city. Their reputation has grown over the years together with the range of activities they deliver and this is the reason that they lead the project management of Kosice 2.0. This compact co-management model is considered as the most effective way to reach project objectives and deliver on time for a quite complex project.

Strong common culture among partners

Managing the implementation of such a complex project where its ingredients (Institute, open data platform, mobile urban lab, advanced visualizations, art installations in public space, urban innovation accelerator, hackathons, proof of connect competitions, networking catalyst program, educational program) must communicate and be synchronized so that the overall program is well orchestrated and performs coherently is a big challenge. Besides the compact and experienced management team, the culture and vision of Kosice 2.0 are commonly shared among the different partners and entities and this facilitates the coordination process of such a complex project.

The Urban Innovation Sphere tears down the silos

With project management responsibility borne by a compact group of experienced public organizations, some of the deliverables become key to break silos within the partnership. The Urban Innovation Sphere is one of those major deliverables bringing together in action many partners together: the City of Kosice (PP1) as the trustee of the micro-grants scheme that announces the grant call, leads the jury of experts and also is the one that defines together with CIKE and CXI the challenges framework for the Proof of Concept competition; CIKE (PP2) that is mainly responsible for Hackathons program but is also active in all other areas supporting with expertise and networks; K13-Kosice Cultural Centres (PP3) is responsible for the venues preparation and for the organization of events and meetups that create linkages, and increase synergies between the UIS tenants (Networking Catalyst program); IT Valley (PP6) supports Networking Catalyst program and hackathons with expertise and network; Civitta Slovakia (PP8) is leading the overall accelerator program and is involved in hackathons and Proof of Concept contributing with its expertise.

Take away points:

- Trusting the project management responsibility to one experienced organization leads to efficient and quick implementation but adds up pressure to a small team that carries most of the workload, responsibility and risk.

- Sustaining a common culture and vision among project partners is key to pursue coherent results in complex projects

- Specific activities or deliverables could create wonderful opportunities for tearing down the silos within a partnership and put many organizations or departments to work together

Kosice 2.0 enjoys its diverse consortium of partners that spread across the entire quadruple helix spectrum of stakeholders and perform under the coordination of an efficient project management team. This composition that has been helping the project acquire an integrated approach to implementation from the get-go is further supported by the embedded participative culture that the project owns to enable a promising cross-sectoral and co-creation approach at many levels.

Kosice 2.0 involves 9 partners in the implementation process that spread across the entire quadruple helix spectrum of stakeholders. Next to the City of Kosice, which is the Main Urban Authority, CIKE and K13 that represent government entities, there is a higher education and research center, a community organization, 1 association and 3 private corporations. The composition of the partnership as well as project's main objective to increase civic participation and bring closer society to government decision making processes help the project acquire a more integrated approach to the implementation where culture of co-creation happens not only for specific outputs but runs throughout the whole project.

Collaborative moments among project partners

There are many moments where a more collaborative approach to implementation is facilitated and project partners work beyond their specific responsibilities or deliverables interacting and co-defining important areas of Kosice 2.0 such as the development of the CXI where all partners are generally involved or the Urban Innovation Sphere where most partners collaborate to deliver specific activities or outputs. Another example is the M&E where CIKE leads the implementation coordinating the CXI experts/staff that have undertaken the monitoring and evaluation workload while the higher education institute TUKE is onboard supporting with expertise and knowledge supervising the process.

Participative project culture

Apart from the collaborative moments and common areas of work among project partners, a strong participative culture runs throughout the project and leads the way of the implementation process. Main objective of Kosice 2.0 is to bring together the cultural community, artists and creative entrepreneurs, the IT start-up community, entrepreneurs from traditional industries, civil society organizations and active citizens with policy makers and City government or public entities to work closer together, increase the well-being of the city, consolidate the culture-led transformation and change the mindset of public policy making. Cross sectoral collaborations have taken place already at many levels. The Urban Innovation Sphere and its different programs has been stimulating this collaborative culture and despite the difficulties posed by the pandemic, the UIS has managed to complete at least one session in all of its public programs bringing at the same place all those different stakeholders to pilot solutions that improve the quality of life in the city and advance its collective intelligence.

Take away points:

- Involving as many and diverse partners and stakeholders from the beginning of the project has definitely helped Kosice 2.0 acquire a more participative way in the implementation process while not losing its efficiency in delivering where it benefits from having a smaller and more compact project management team

- The program's embedded participative culture has enabled already interesting and promising cross sectoral collaborations

05. Monitoring and evaluation

Challenge level ●

M&E activity is undertaken by CXI experts and has been quite detailed and meticulously designed. The team is working with a theory of change model that lets map mid-steps to achieve the broader goals of a complicated project.

An independent expert group at CXI has undertaken the responsibility of the M&E activity having compiled its detailed methodology in a quite extensive document that has been shared and communicated to all project partners. The project management team believes that the highest credibility and objectivity of monitoring and evaluation can be achieved by the involvement of an independent evaluator while the expertise of this evaluator is of major importance for the process, but success requires certain level of independence. To help support with expertise the the M&E methodology has been also supervised by the TUKE professor which has created a small opportunity for collaboration between 2 partners around M&E.

Theory of Change model
The M&E team is using the theory of change model to better follow the process that leads to the final outcomes and be able to monitor the mid-term changes and mini-steps along the way in a complex and broad project such as Kosice 2.0. Despite using a model which could facilitate participation it does not seem that there is an intention or a need to become more participative and involve actively more partners into the process.

System of Measuring
4 different pillars have been set so that they cover the whole spectrum of the expected impact of the project and its dimensions (cultural vibrancy, life satisfaction, local government, data, creative economy). 14 different variables represent the mini-steps (such as visits to museums and events, life satisfaction rate, trust in public institutions, policy recommendations, tasing awareness in the use of data, citizens participation in entrepreneurial activities) and there is a clear method to measure all of theses different variables and this is prescribed in the most accurate way in the methodology document. The team will be measuring external parameters (areas outside the project that could be affected or statistics acquired by organisations outside the project- eg. increase or decrease in the number of tickets into the museum visits as measured by the Statistical Office) and internal parameters (areas within the project that are directly affected and statistics taken by feedback forms from people involved in the project).

Take away points:

- Using Theory of Change model is a very effective methodology when working with a broad and complicated project and there is a need in following and mapping the mid-steps to achieve the broader goals

- Working with internal and external system of measuring is a great idea to better justify results

06. Communication with target beneficiaries and users

Challenge level ●

Communication is one of the strongest elements of Kosice 2.0 that utilizes a multiplicity and diversity of inspiring ways to reach out and engage with target beneficiaries and audience. Communication is in line with the participative culture embedded in the project and is an open and engaging process that goes much beyond than offering the simple information.

Open and engaging communication is one of the strongest elements of Kosice 2.0 that utilizes a multiplicity and diversity of inspiring ways to reach out and engage with target beneficiaries and audience. We could definitely argue that this type of open and fresh communication is embedded to the project's identity as this aims to reach out to the different target-communities of Kosice (artists, IT start ups, traditional entrepreneurs, active citizens, City officials), inviting them to become active, participate and interact in a number of ways with the initiative: be part of a new hybrid ecosystem in the Bravo building; come with an idea and explore innovations collaborating with other fellow citizens while getting support from experts in the field; participate to the networking meet ups of East Side heroes and learn, share or exchange ideas under a specific theme; take part to the community meet ups for participatory planning organized by the Mobile Urban Lab and CXI and change the experience of city parks; answer questionnaires and fill in feedback forms participating to the evaluation of program's activities or help measure the impact of the project to the overall well-being. The communication team is using mainly digital channels of communication where it also publishes and distributes its calls to action: a very well developed website which is regularly updated with news, stories, articles, interviews videos and translated in English; social media accounts in Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube channel.

Sustaining energy despite limitations

Despite the challenges that emerged from the measures taken to prevent the spread of the pandemic, the project managed to sustain the energy among its community of end users and audience utilizing digital solutions combined with larger physical events whenever this was possible.

Going beyond the simple information

Kosice 2.0 has been reaching out to its audience through calls to action, as a large part of its communication activities are participative events, workshops, accelerator programs, hackathons or competitions. Engaging with the audience through collaborative actions help convey the messages of the project in ways that go beyond sharing simply the information.

Challenges to convey key messages

Kosice 2.0 project works quite successfully when it comes to a participative approach to communication. However, the communication team has been facing challenges when it comes to crafting a concise and clear message regarding what the project is about. Kosice 2.0 is a broad and complex project with many dimensions that is not easily described to a wider audience with one sentence. To overcome this problem, the management team is outsourcing the work of crafting concise and clear messages to an international company that will also help the project acquire international visibility.

Take away points:

- Communication is aligned with the participative culture embedded in the project and many of the project's flag collaborative activities (Urban Innovation Sphere, Mobile Urban Lab) perform also as major communication events

- Going beyond sharing simply the information using a series of calls to action help establish a two-way inclusive communication

- Use of questionnaires and feedback forms help engage with audience and target beneficiaries right from the start

07. Upscaling		*There is a certain confidence that the project is going to be embraced by a national and international community and that the reputation and other activities of its leader CIKE will help attract international attention and disseminate results to a wider network.*
Challenge level	●	

Although it is early to have a complete view of upscaling opportunities for Kosice 2.0, we can definitely argue that there is a certain confidence that the project is going to be embraced by a national and international community. This is based on the fact that its leader, CIKE organization, enjoys its wide reputation at a national level but also has the capacity and skills to attract international attention, especially with a project funded by Urban Innovative Actions. A the same time CIKE is very active in the community running a range of programs and networking activities through Kosice 2.0 but also beyond and this is a great opportunity to disseminate the results of the project to a wider network.

At the same time, the project consists of different components such as the CXI, Mobile Urban Lab and Urban Innovation Sphere that could work not only as an ecosystem but also as independent items and that could facilitate the upscaling process.

4. CONCLUSION

Kosice 2.0 project is an innovative intervention that approaches culture in very contemporary and novel ways turning it to a powerful tool that is able to impact the city overall, reinforce its development trajectory, improve the well-being of citizens and help open up the decision making processes shaping multiple public platforms that help engage with active citizens and communities.

The initiative is well strategically positioned as it belongs to a greater vision for the city of Kosice that capitalizes on cultural dynamics to face its challenges and to shape its identity as a contemporary post-industrial city that can move forward with confidence to a knowledge based era.

Working with an integrated and holistic approach Kosice 2.0 manages to address a range of challenges and needs that the city is facing today, be it the economic transition from a heavily industrial economy, the lack of trust to public institutions, low levels of civic engagement, the need to design more accurate policies and upgrade public service provision or the need to improve the urban environment.

During the first year of implementation the project has progressed quite steadily with no major delays despite the pandemic limitations and the complexity of the interventions succeeding in launching the Citizens Experience and Well-Being Institute, the Urban Innovation Sphere and its range of programs, the educational program for civil servants and for University students while it has also started reshaping its premises and upgrading cultural infrastructure to host its variety of programs. Throughout this timeframe the project has been benefiting by its solid leadership and efficient management model as well as from its wide partnership that helps sustain a common broader vision and enthusiasm among the team members. What has also been notable to mention is the high level of engagement with the wider community of creative entrepreneurs, IT start-ups, active citizens and wider public through a range of calls to action, participatory public events in the neighborhoods, open competitions/accelerators and thematic meetups or events.

Dealing with a generous and complex public procurement has been the project's most prominent challenge so far especially when dealing with building infrastructure upgrade that expands upon a range of areas from furnishing to state-of-the-art, highly technological equipment and a community of end-users with a number of needs to be addressed. Despite difficulties the team has devised solutions to overcome obstacles of public procurement along the way so being able not to fall behind with the overall project development.

The new Mobile Urban Lab infrastructure will be up and running.

During the next year Kosice 2.0 project is planning to see its CXI facility being further upgraded and tested with its open data portal being launched and the Mobile Unit infrastructure being completed and starting visiting neighborhoods, activating public spaces and collecting data using its equipment. The CXI is planning to move a step further testing its data methodology and acquiring a volume of urban data to populate its public digital platform and inform its complementary activities while also start working with artists community to explore how those information could be showcased in public spaces. Kosice 2.0 project is also looking forward to supporting more early stage start-ups and innovative ideas coming from the community through the Urban Innovation Sphere and also seeing the results of the first Proof of Concept competition which is currently active. The educational program, which is also active at this point, will have the chance to see the first results of its training pilots.

Culture and cultural heritage

See on UIA website