



Union pour la Méditerranée  
Union for the Mediterranean  
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط



**MEDITERRANEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE  
CAPITALES MEDITERRANEENNES DE LA CULTURE**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE  
INITIATION, SELECTION AND ORGANISATION  
OF ANNUAL MEDITERRANEAN CAPITALS FOR CULTURE**

***MARCH 2023***

## 1. Background

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Following the endorsement of the Concept for annual designations of ‘Mediterranean Capitals for Culture’ at the 7<sup>th</sup> UfM Regional Forum meeting held in Barcelona on 24 November 2022 and building on the Naples Declaration of the Ministers of Culture of the Euro-Mediterranean region of 17 June 2022, the present document sets out the TORs to be applied for the initiation, selection and organisation of said Capitals on an annual basis.

Important to note that the first-ever launch of the process of initiation, selection and organisation will have to follow a slightly different timeframe, as set out in Annex A, due to the year having already started.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

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### a) General

The **UfM Secretariat and the Anna Lindh Foundation** jointly coordinate the process of initiation, selection and organisation of the annual nomination of Mediterranean Capitals for Culture under the overall responsibility of the UfM Senior Officials.

The UfM Secretariat and the Anna Lindh Foundation will establish a dedicated interactive website for these purposes that is always updated and helps interested cities access the concept, the TORs, deadlines, best practices, potential donors, and other relevant information.

### b) Advisory Committee

The **Advisory Committee** is responsible for the preliminary assessment of candidatures against the definition of criteria (generic as in the present TOR, and specific as in the yearly calls for candidature) before their selection by UfM Senior Officials.

The **Advisory committee** will be composed of a representative of the following organisations: UfM Secretariat; ALF Secretariat; ARLEM. It will be co-chaired by the UfM and the ALF Secretariats. It will report to the SOM, notably by sharing the minutes of its meetings.

### 3. Scope and Definitions related to the concept of Mediterranean Capitals of Culture (MCC)

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#### a) Eligibility criteria

To be eligible, the applicants will have to respect a set of minimum criteria:

- Be located in a member state of the Union for the Mediterranean, regardless of whether they are cities on the coast or inland.
- Represent a local or regional authority regardless of the size of the city. The application shall be made under the name of a city. This means that applicants may present a program involving their surrounding areas, but the title will be awarded to the city rather than the whole area.
- A city can only be awarded the designation of MCC once.
- Other criteria might be foreseen in the specific calls for applications developed each year by the UfM Secretariat and the ALF Secretariat.

#### b) Award criteria

##### i) Programme

The two "Mediterranean Capitals of Culture" shall offer programmes coordinated by local authorities with the support of a coalition of cultural institutions, schools and universities, sports institutions, civil society organisations, and other relevant actors.

By way of example, the programmes may include conferences and seminars on topics critical to the region, civic engagement initiatives, and cultural performances that celebrate the Euro-Mediterranean identity and diversity.

While there is a plurality of awarding criteria, the Euro-Mediterranean dimension of the programmes will be a key requirement. Indeed, the MCC designation is international by nature and rests on an active partnership between the two designated cities.

Following the need to engage local communities as much as possible, the scheduled events should be rich and varied enough to involve the entire population and inform them of ongoing regional projects they could benefit directly from.

Particular attention will be given to the role played by civil society in implementing the programmes and their accessibility to the general public and specifically to young people, the elderly and women.

Given that cities operate in context-specific environments, applicants are not required to follow a standard programme template or foresee a minimum number of activities. Each candidate city can elaborate its programme according to its objectives and capacities. The evaluation will concern the **coherence and consistency of the programme, the clarity of the objectives set, and the applicant's documented ability to deliver.**

At the time of application, the proposal must include a **general overview of the programme deployment throughout the year**, demonstrating a strategic approach and an overall vision. Applicants shall emphasise: 1) the involvement of cultural actors and civil society organisations in the conception and implementation of the programme; 2) the range and diversity of the activities proposed and their overall quality; 3) and the capacity to combine the promotion of local tangible cultural heritage and living heritage practices with the support for contemporary cultural and creative domains. The use of innovative digital tools and creative methodologies will be highly valued.

Concerning the salience of the proposed activities, applicants shall refer to the definition of culture set forward in UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), namely that *"culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs"* (UNESCO, 2001).

The program shall culminate in a **large celebration on the Day of the Mediterranean** (28 November).

## **ii) Euro-Mediterranean dimension**

Applicant cities can propose programmes aligned with their priorities and reflecting the local context. However, as the MCC is an international designation shaped after a Euro-Mediterranean *ethos*, **successful applications shall combine local objectives with a solid regional vision.**

The programme content and its objectives shall reflect this vision, for the ambition of an MCC will be **to broaden the understanding and awareness of their citizens on the richness and diversity of cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean region, as well as on the commonalities between these cultures, heritage, and history.**

Therefore, the proposed programme shall include activities promoting **intercultural dialogue, greater mutual understanding, and integration** across the Euro-Mediterranean

region. The programme could address **current regional challenges** identified by UfM members, namely<sup>1</sup>:

- Environmental and climate action.
- Sustainable and inclusive economic and human development.
- Social inclusiveness and equality as essential elements in the socio-economic development of the region.
- Digital transformation.

Finally, the programme shall feature Euro-Mediterranean artists and participants and encourage **international partnerships to attract the interest of a broad Euro-Mediterranean and global public.**

### **iii) Content and objectives of the cooperation between the two Mediterranean Capitals of Culture**

The MCC award will be assigned each cycle to two cities representing the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean. The two cities will be invited to collaborate in the manner and level of interaction deemed appropriate by them.

This partnership will be open to all eligible cities, irrespective of previous cooperation (e.g., twinning programmes) and territorial collocation, to promote innovative and fruitful interactions with territories with limited integration.

Each city is expected to submit one individual application, which will be evaluated as a stand-alone proposal. Cities may but are not obliged to refer to cooperation agreements with a counterpart city established in the framework of the MCC application process. Regardless of the nature of the application, programmes must always include viable and assessable modalities and content to enable collaboration with the counterpart.

### **iv) Civil Society engagement**

The involvement of the local civil society community in preparing the application and implementing the initiative will be a fundamental award criterion.

Partnerships between local authorities and at least one civil society organisation member of one of the **ALF National Networks**<sup>2</sup> are strongly recommended and will be highly valued.

Programmes shall ensure opportunities for a **broad and diverse range of citizens to attend or actively participate in the activities.** Applicants shall develop inclusion measures to ensure activities are accessible to all parts of society, including for instance young people, elderly, women.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Co-Presidency-Statement-V-UfM-Regional-Forum.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> A list of member organisations can be found at the following link <https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/networks>

Applicants' capacity to promote intercultural learning, the enhancement of intercultural competencies and skills, and the strengthening of intercultural knowledge will also be assessed through the evaluation of proposals to involve **education institutions**.

For-profit stakeholders active in cultural and creative domains can be involved provided they are engaged in the framework of public-private-civic partnerships.

#### **v) Governance and management**

A **clear governance structure and management** of the MCC initiative shall be described in the application to ensure proper delivery and implementation of the programme and to facilitate cooperation with the different partners at the local and international levels.

The applicant will have assured themselves prior of the full political **support and a commitment from all local, regional, and national authorities** concerned.

#### **vi) Communication**

The applicant shall foresee a communication and dissemination plan to ensure wide national and international accessibility and visibility.

#### **vii) Environmental impact**

Finally, the applicant shall address the **environmental impact** of the submitted programme.

#### **viii) Financing**

Cities interested in getting designated as "Mediterranean Capital of Culture" must be made aware that there is no direct financial support and must bear all related costs.

In accordance with the Annual Work Programme 2022 approved by the ALF BoG in June 2022 and the Action Grant Contract signed with DG NEAR, an annual budget of 40.000€ is foreseen to implement five intercultural initiatives (8000€ each) led by members of the ALF Civil Society National Networks in tandem with the designated cities each year. This fund can complement the funding of activities foreseen by awarded cities.

The Advisory Committee can assist in establishing contacts with potential donors for project-based funding where required.

The UfM Secretariat will ensure that some of its meetings foreseen in its annual work programme will be organised in the selected MCC, ideally one per division (i.e. 6 events in total).

Co-designated cities (North and South) will be invited to consider mutual support where feasible.

Financial support from the private sector might be envisaged when relevant and respectful of the eligibility and award criteria.

#### 4. Process of Initiation, Selection and organisation

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##### a) *Call for candidature*

Based on a proposal by the UfM Secretariat and ALF, following endorsement by UfM Senior officials, a Call for candidature is **published** NLT 1 March of each calendar year. Apart from generic criteria, see further above, there might be specific criteria and provisions added.

Specific information and/or requirements will be contained in each annual call, to be published online a week (7 days) before the opening of the bidding.

##### b) *Applications*

Each candidate city shall submit **a single (one) application**. While the inclusion of pre-existing cooperation agreements with another city applying in the framework of the MCC initiative is allowed and encouraged, each application will be **assessed separately**. **In the case of a pre-existing cooperation agreement in the framework of the MCC initiative, awarding** the MCC designation to one of the two cities will not necessarily imply the counterpart's success but will be highly valued in the evaluation process.

Applications shall be in **English** and made electronically, following the procedure to be described in each annual application call. Applications must be fully completed; missing documents will disqualify the candidate city. An **administrative check** will be done to check the eligibility of the applications received.

The Advisory Committee will **acknowledge receipt** of the application within 5 working days.

##### c) *Preliminary assessment*

The **Advisory committee** will proceed with a preliminary assessment of the candidatures against the set criteria (eligibility and award criteria, those generic as in the present TOR, and any specific criteria added in the yearly calls). The Advisory Committee will submit a ranking with observations and recommendations to Senior Officials NLT 15 September each year.

##### d) *Selection*

Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, **UfM Senior officials** will proceed with a review and select two cities (one from the North and one from the South) in view of their formal announcements at the yearly UfM Regional Forum meetings in November each year.





## 5. Recollection Yearly Calendar

Action	Description	Deadline
<b>Preparation of the call for Mediterranean Capitals of Culture</b>	<i>Specific call on the basis of the generic TORs sent to SOMs for endorsement</i>	<i>October (ALF/UfM-S) November/December (SOMs)</i>
<b>Publication of the Call</b>	Call published: Communication to cities through the UfM/ALF website; specific website of the initiative; ARLEM and other networks of cities; social media	January
	Second communication/reminder of deadline	March/April
<b>Closure of the call for applications</b>	Deadline for applications	31 May
<b>Evaluation of the applications</b>	Assessment by Advisory Committee	15 July
	Consultation of the recommendations with the UfM Co-Presidency	July-September
	Submission to UfM Senior Officials	15 September
	Review and agreement by Senior officials	End of October – mid November
<b>Announcement</b>	Announcement of the two first Mediterranean Capitals of Culture at the UfM Regional Forum meeting	28 November

The calendar for the first cycle of initiation, selection, and announcement in 2023 for the first year 2025 is enclosed in Annex A.

## 6. Monitoring and implementation

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The UfM Secretariat and Anna Lindh Foundation, with the help of the Advisory Committee, will accompany the cities in their organisation, including by sharing best practices and by providing all necessary information on process etc. on a user-friendly multilingual website.

Once the announcement of the two MCCs is made, the UfM Secretariat and Anna Lindh Foundation, with the help of the Advisory Committee, will establish contact with their governance teams to **accompany the two candidate cities**, including in fine-tuning their programme and in following implementation and applying close monitoring. Three meetings will be arranged to follow-up on the preparations (i.e., a preliminary meeting, a mid-year meeting, and a final preparatory meeting). *Ad hoc* meetings can be set before and during the MCC year as required.

The Advisory Committee will act as depository of **best practices** to be proactively established, assembled, kept up to date and shared with candidate cities. For such to be effective, (i) the UfM Secretariat and Anna Lindh Foundation together with the Advisory Board shall perform a lessons report after each selection/assignment process and (ii) awarded cities shall provide within the time frame of 2 months after the termination of their activities a full report on activities including lessons identified that the Advisory Board shall take into account for future processes.

Each candidate city will be responsible for ensuring the **visibility** of the initiatives and the communication and dissemination of relevant results.

The UfM Secretariat, Anna Lindh Foundation Secretariat and ARLEM will support these efforts through their respective communication teams, including by developing a joint visual identity for the two MCCs, highlighting cross-cutting actions and strengthening the overall coherence of the initiative and the two programmes, as well as in disseminating the results of the initiative through their wide audiences (media and stakeholders).

**Compliance with the UfM and ALF communication and dissemination guidelines**, the use of logos in any communication and visibility activities implemented will be specified in each annual call.

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**Calendar for the first cycle of initiation, selection and announcement  
in 2023 for the first year 2025**

Action	Description	Deadline
<b>Launch of the call for applications 2025</b>	Opening of the call	3 April 2023
	Communication to cities through the UfM/ALF websites; ARLEM and other networks of cities; social media	April 2023
	Second round of communication/reminder of deadline	May 2023
<b>Closure of the call for applications 2025</b>	Deadline for applications	2 July 2023
<b>Evaluation of the applications</b>	Assessment by Advisory Committee	30 July 2023
	Consultation of the recommendations with the UfM Co-Presidency	15 August-15 September 2023
	Submission to the UfM Senior Officials and deliberations	15 September-30 October
	Selection of the two cities	Early November 2023
<b>Announcement</b>	Announcement of the two first Mediterranean Capitals of Culture 2025	28 November 2023/8 <sup>th</sup> UfM Regional Forum
<b>Preparation of the Mediterranean Capitals of Culture 2025</b>	<i>Meetings with the two selected cities</i>	<i>December 2023/January 2024 May/June 2024 October/November 2024</i>