Interreg
Baltic Sea Region

EUROPEAN UNION

EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

South Savo (FIN)

Saint Petersburg (RUS)

Estonia

Midtjylland (DEN)

Skåne (SWE)

Schleswig-Holstein (GER)

Hamburg (GER)

West Pomerania (POL)

Vilnius (LTU)

CREATIVE PORTS

CCI/Cultural Funding accessibility in the BSR/Baltic Sea Region with a particular focus on Mobility Funding and Cooperation Funding tools.

ARS BALTICA

ON THE MOVE

Research Study
Final report in view of the Creative Port Conference (6–8 September 2021)
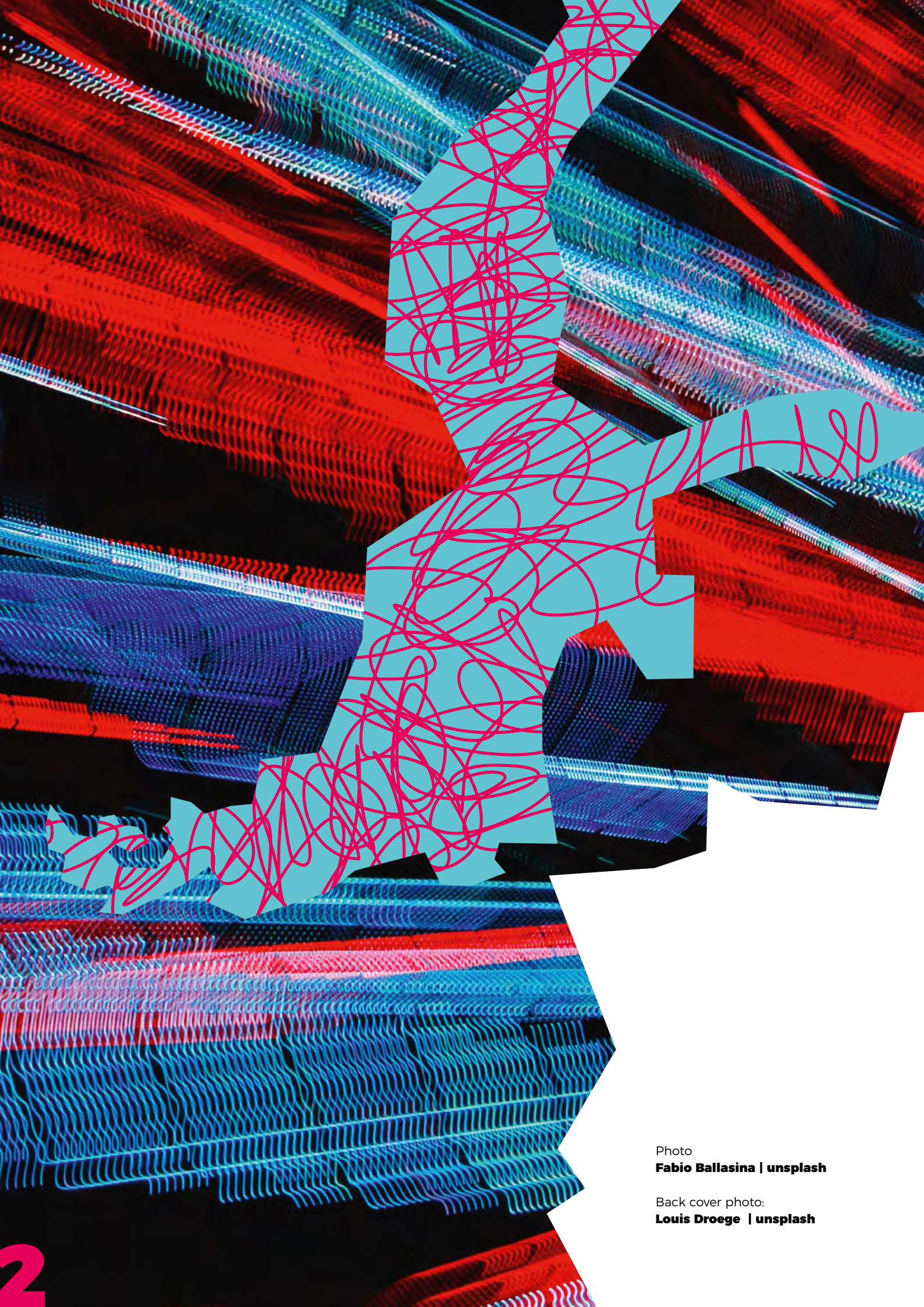
5 September 2021

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1.Context

Part of the Interreg project Creative Ports, On the Move has been selected and commissioned to produce a research study on **CCI/ Cultural Funding accessibility in the BSR / Baltic Sea Region** with a particular focus on **Mobility Funding and Cooperation Funding tools**.

The following outputs for the research study have been identified:
(1)   A mapping of all relevant existing funding tools on Mobility Funding and Cooperation Funding for the CCI Sector within the Baltic Sea region.

Further actions include:
(2)   The development of a possible structure for a digital BSR CCI/ Cultural Funding Guide
(3)   The initial steps for a sustainable data updating system with focus on national/regional network-systems including possible collaboration partnerships.

A further outcome is a (4) written policy recommendation for future equal accessibility on funding tool/knowledge for all abovementioned countries.

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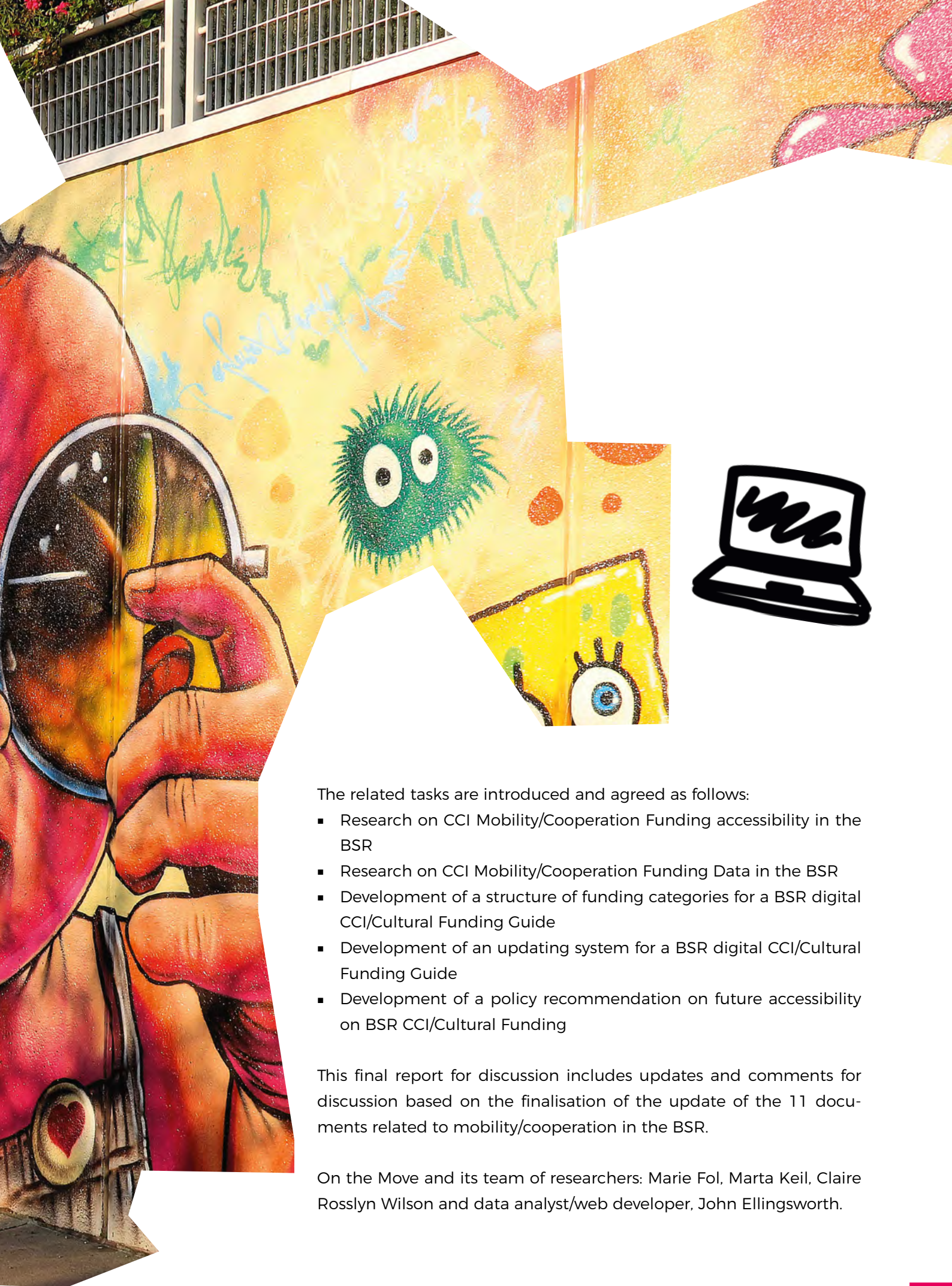
The related tasks are introduced and agreed as follows:

- Research on CCI Mobility/Cooperation Funding accessibility in the BSR
- Research on CCI Mobility/Cooperation Funding Data in the BSR
- Development of a structure of funding categories for a BSR digital CCI/Cultural Funding Guide
- Development of an updating system for a BSR digital CCI/Cultural Funding Guide
- Development of a policy recommendation on future accessibility on BSR CCI/Cultural Funding

This final report for discussion includes updates and comments for discussion based on the finalisation of the update of the 11 documents related to mobility/cooperation in the BSR.

On the Move and its team of researchers: Marie Fol, Marta Keil, Claire Rosslyn Wilson and data analyst/web developer, John Ellingsworth.

2. State of the arts

a) Situation:

Mobility Funding and Cooperation Funding for the CCI Sector within the Baltic Sea region:

The basis of the work for this task is the 11 cultural mobility funding guides that were produced for the first time in 2017 for the 11 Baltic Sea Region countries, through a collaboration between On the Move and ARS BALTICA.

The full revision of the guides[1] informs us of relevant trends, challenges and related opportunities in terms of mobility and cooperation funding, and their accessibility for the Baltic Sea region. The guides have all been updated and enriched; only the most recent information collected between July and September 2021 is included. The Guide for the Russian Federation is new since the 2017 edition was conceived as a repertory. Only the introduction and cover have not been revised while waiting for the next steps.

b) Funding schemes/sub-sectors:

- In general, there has been an increase in listings between the 2017 and the 2021 guides, although this might not be due to the increase in funding schemes as such (some of the new additions to the 2021 guides are long-term schemes that hadn't been previously included in the guides). In some cases, the number of organisations has doubled or more than doubled, although in the cases of countries that already had a large number of opportunities (such as Germany, Norway and Sweden) the increase was more modest.

- There has been some restructuring of grants/streams, but the quantity of opportunities seems similar for the major funding bodies and foundations. The amounts of the grants don't seem to have changed significantly since 2017, which might suggest that grants aren't being adjusted for the possible rise in costs/inflation.

- With regards to the specific needs of the different CCI sub-sectors, funding schemes already identified and/or confirmed often have

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1   Available on Dropbox: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pt0zxtcoebldcsl/AAAJm7B9rsBy7UCMafNrGVgBa?dl=0)

artform-specific streams or there is a balance between artform-specific organisations with expert knowledge. Where this knowledge could perhaps be less specific could be in the private foundations who fund a wide range of activities, although this would depend greatly on the number and experience of their staff.

- There are residencies that seemed to be on hold, or have deferred their residents to the following year, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.
- Some grants in the past few rounds have specifically targeted the impacts of COVID-19.
- In terms of digital mobility formats, Germany (see for example German Federal Cultural Foundation) has some interesting initiatives that specifically support digitalisation and re-thinking programmes for online delivery. Other grants might be open to digital elements, but it hasn't seemed so overt.
- With regards to CCI, some design and architecture have been incorporated into the visual art streams. With libraries and heritage, it seems more difficult to find mobility-related funding. Libraries in particular seem to be quite connected to local community building as opposed to mobility schemes. The support specifically for radio also seems quite connected to local areas. There has been some presence of funding for gaming (often in audio-visual or film streams) but mobility support for start-up funding and support for fashion or other more commercialised CCIs has been more difficult to identify.
- Support for film has some interesting international co-creation mechanisms and incentives (for example, tax incentives or cash rebates). This could be an interesting model to promote co-creation in other fields of CCI.

c) Transversal issues/ cross-sectoral potential trends

- In some countries there is some attention paid to the regional/ urban divide, and they promote different national initiatives to minimise this divide (for example van hire support for travelling musicians, or collaborations between regional and city theatres to ensure that quality programming reaches regional areas). Such mobility funding is nationally based, but this could indicate a gap for international mobility, in that it could be more challenging for international performers to tour remote areas.

- Another area that some funders highlighted was ways of increasing diversity within the creative sector and the value of multicultural actors in facilitating cultural exchanges. This can be seen in several of the Nordic relationships (such as the Rozentāls Society – the Finnish-Latvian Friendship Association – or the Swedish Cultural Fund in Finland). In Germany there are some interesting grants that support multicultural actors within mainstream organisations, which could have interesting implications for future international collaborations, if not mobility directly.
- With regards to the environmental impact of CCI, mobility and export, several funders offer separate grants for cultural organisations to support the development of more environmentally sustainable practices. This can be seen as an interesting approach, since projects can have very tight budgets and organisations might therefore choose to apply cheaper approaches, whereas a separate grant might enable more ambitious/impactful/long-term approaches.

d) A diverse region/discrepancies and access

- There is still a large discrepancy between countries that have cultural policy embedding mobility funding schemes' support (particular the Nordic countries and Germany) and those more at the margins in terms of access to mobility funding schemes (Poland, Russia and Baltic countries to a certain extent)
- In the BSR, some countries are strongly connected (particularly the Nordic and Nordic-Baltic countries) through regional funding schemes, some are connected through their direct frontiers (Finland/Western Russia etc.).
- There are discrepancies between regions within these countries and those that are geographically closer to the Baltic Sea.
- There are also discrepancies in terms of language access, the communication language often being English for cross-border mobility and cooperation, which is far from being accessible for some countries and individuals. Minorities' languages in some countries (like Sweden, Finland etc.) are also crucial to engage more communities to be engaged in such exchange.
- The BSR covers countries whether they are EU countries or not, with one, Russia, not being a direct beneficiary of any EU mobility related programmes in the CCI sector.

e) Key observations based on the research

- The number of organisations in each guide to provide with some numbers and comparison (even if one organisation may offer more than 2 funding schemes): Estonia (8), Lithuania (8), Iceland (10), Latvia (11), Poland (17), Russia (22), Denmark (41), Finland (33), Norway (44), Sweden (33) and Germany (68).

- In each researched guide, there has been an increase in the number of organisations (see above point).

- In general, the increases were due to the addition of residencies, private foundations (including education-focused foundations that fund culture / the CCI sector) and some film organisations. The increase in Germany was also influenced by sourcing more local council funding.

- There were some residencies no longer in operation and some unions have stopped their grant programmes, although they still provide other support (i.e. Latvia Writers' Union and Trade Union for Danish Playwrights).

- Finland seems to have more changes in the grant structure or number of grants in the well-established funders (i.e. Arts Promotion Centre Finland, Frame Contemporary Art Finland, FILI-literature).

- Well-established funders in other countries seem to have similar areas funded (although there was some restructuring in the Danish Arts Foundation to be organised more by discipline).

- Denmark had strong music funders and was one of the few that had different organisations focused on different styles (folk, jazz, etc.). Some of these initiatives seemed to combine more commercial elements of CCI.

f) Situation heightened by the COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has put to a halt to many of the mobility opportunities and support schemes and has made even more vulnerable, artists, creators and culture professionals in the CCI sector that do not benefit from a strong support system in their respective countries. The situation has also highlighted the fact that for many artists, cultural and creative professionals, mobility and internationalisation of practices are an economic necessity (for touring, training, developing one's business etc.). Gaps of access are increased for funding, opportunities, etc.

As far as the CCI in the region is concerned, some trends and related needs can already be highlighted that are not always illustrated by appropriate mobility funding schemes:

- There was an increase of digital mobility formats through collaboration projects, training and e-residencies mostly concerning countries where mobility schemes were already in place before the pandemic,

- There was an increase of remote work and legal challenges for workers willing to work remotely (in a country different from the employer's country). Legal challenges can be linked in particular to taxation and social protection rights (both for the worker and eventually his/her family).

- There has been a more complex situation related to the movement of people and goods (visas requirements in some cases, vaccination passports and specific and fast-evolving health checks and requirements before and after traveling etc.). This situation is even exacerbated for more vulnerable arts workers' communities (people with disabilities, artists with temporary work permits in EU countries for instance etc.).

- There has been a need to build one's capacity as far as digital technologies are concerned (including for copyright issues) with a great diversity of sectors within the CCI sector to take into consideration (some being more tech-used than others).

- There has been a strengthening of key transversal issues as far as environmental sustainability is concerned but also questions related to gender (family support when in mobility for instance), accessibility, inclusion etc.

Last but not least, the crisis has also led to some expected decrease of funding allocated to the CCI sector in general and international collaboration/mobility in particular, including in countries where funding and policies in place are the strongest.[2]

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2   https://www.norden.org/en/news/committee-budget-proposal-threat-nordic-cultural-co-operation)

3. Technical and contents recommendations

a) For the BSR funding guides and/or related web-system:

Contents:

Cultural Mobility Funding guide format

Current format
Name of the organisation/funding scheme
Type of mobility
Sector
Eligibility of beneficiaries
Geographical criteria
Profession
Destination incoming/outgoing
Other
Size of grants
Last viewed
URL

Key transversal points:
Funded mobilities (travel when mobilities are on-site)
Diversity of mobility formats (from mobilities to connect, prospect, collaborate, create, train, research etc.)
Accessible information online (through transparent processes and open calls with regular deadlines, at least once a year)

Possible structure for a digital BSR CCI/Cultural Funding Guide

Have a more end users' perspective while re-thinking the structure to try and anticipate how users might look for information (not necessarily by public/private funders).
For example:
- Multidisciplinary funding/cross-sectoral
- Discipline specific (i.e. export music)
- National/regional funding/Local funding
- Residencies
- Training/Capacity building (beyond formal education)
- Bilateral public funds etc.

Additional points:
- All formats of mobility including paid digital formats (to connect, collaborate, create etc.)
- Systematic inclusion in all short introductions of funding organisations and related funding schemes: sustainability/accessibility policy and/or tax rebates for grantees and fair payment for instance.
- A separate document with regional sources of funding in order not to repeat the information in all national guides (particularly the Nordic/Baltic ones).

Accessibility/web-development:

Cultural Mobility Funding guide format

Contents
Organised by type of funders (public/private //
national/local and regional levels)
Entry via discipline and type of mobility
Focus on incoming and outgoing mobility
Table of contents connected to chapters and
funding schemes

Possible structure for a digital BSR CCI/Cultural Funding Guide

More dynamic structure where end users can click on key words (tags) to look for information (particularly sector or specific support for accessibility).

Accessible guide for people with visual impairment (using for instance the Luciole font as in this guide): https://on-the-move.org/resources/funding/mobility-funding-guide-arab-region

This would include to follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to the AA standard and manually test with assistive technologies.

Each guide is put on a special web-page with additional specific information (in English and language(s) of the said country):

- Clear and concise guidance on how to use the guide(s)
- A location specific contact person to follow up on questions or via ARS BALTICA
- A list of additional resources and web-platforms particularly with one off calls (ARS BALTICA, On the Move, Culture Agora etc.)
- A list of key organisations or resources to navigate through administrative, tax issues, etc. (Mobility Info Points, National Social Security administrations etc.)
- A connection to EU programmes particularly relevant for the CCI sector etc.

Note: the guides as updated in the Dropbox are still in line with the first set of guides produced in 2017 but they already include: CCI sectors (beyond the arts and cultural sector) as well as accessibility or sustainability issues.

b) SWOT analysis: guide vs web-platform

Cultural mobility funding guides, for regular mobility funding schemes, have been adopted as a format to easily access information. Web-based types of information sharing could also be a solution but they would require consistent and regular updates in terms of content, web development and related funding support.

Strengths

Guide
- Easier to understand it as a snapshot from the time it was published – so potentially fewer complaints about things being out of date.
- Easier to understand and propose as partnerships to funders as a 'product' and more impressive as an overview of activity that can be used by the sector and policy makers/funders.
- Other organisations and websites can host the guide (also good for longevity).
- Can be used offline once downloaded.
- Have a basis/template to start from with previous guides.
- Single cost for external support (a designer to do the layout).
- Can be printed (even if not recommended).

Web-platform
- Provides rich metadata for user filtering. (PDF contains metadata but has to choose a principle category by which to order itself e.g. Part 1 is residencies, Part 2 is project funding …). Website is not so constrained – for example a user can call up a list of project funding opportunities in a specific country for a specific art form.

Weakness

Guide
- Fiddly to update if small changes are needed.
- PDF intrinsically not a very accessible format.
- Not optimal experience on mobile.
- Can provide index or look up tables, but can't sort or filter.

Web-platform
- Potentially entails extra work with data entry
- Compared to guide, higher expectation from the sector for regular and consistent updates because this is an online search engine.
- Need to be fully accessible also for people with low Internet connections.

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- Can implement revision logging and version control for cleaner records and a better picture of change over time.
- Easier to make on-going improvements and to have these cascade down through the existing database.
- Scales well – a PDF might seem 'too long' for the user, but a database is more manageable with filtering.
- Easy to migrate data if another system or format is desired in the future.
- Get better analytics on use: not just how many downloads of a guide, but which pages are viewed and from where, how filters are used, etc.

Opportunities

Guide
- Funders (including ministries/arts councils)' visibility is easier to communicate on

Web-platform
- Opportunity to focus on the underlying data and think about outputs flexibly and programmatically. A PDF guide can't be used to generate a database, but a database can generate a PDF guide.
- Opportunity to align with emerging standards like the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).
- Sort of an opportunity AND threat: increased pressure to conceptualise work with information not as a side project but a foundational activity that connects to other strategic goals.
- Can reach a larger audience (if accessibility conditions are embedded)

Photo: Julian Mora | unsplash

Threats

Guide
- Funders are usually related to countries where funding schemes are the highest, creating a greater sense of discrepancies in terms of information provision and funding support.

Web-platform
- The deeper you go with building platforms the more liability you have in terms of technical work and content upkeep. This also increases reliance on external experts as it's harder to do things in-house.
- Web-platform's technical development requires updates and adaptation and more importantly dedicated persons for the update and research process (by experience, web-platform relying on the good will of organisations willing to update their information does not work and often does not fit with the overall editorial policy of the said platform).
- A larger project implies some extra and unforeseen cost particularly when it relates to a diversity of countries / contexts.
- The web-platform is not only about the search engine related to the funding schemes but also the key additional information that is provided (in national/local language(s), see recommendation page 12).
- Funding may be secure for the launch of the said platform but not for its long term support which is crucial (maintenance, regular update, communication in diverse languages, capacity building etc.).

4. Policy recommendation for future equal accessibility on funding tool/ knowledge for all 11 BSR countries

Like the above, this section will be fine-tuned in the final research study but the following points can already be mentioned for further discussion, investigation and writing. These recommendations will also be read and connected when possible to the Creative Ports' policy recommendations.[3]

a) Funding schemes for mobility and cooperation

At the level of the BSR countries, a **differentiated approach** is needed:

- To address the **huge gaps of access to funding** between countries and the different realities in each country (cost of traveling, living, local wages, etc.), need for remuneration included in a digital mobility context;
- To **bridge the gap** between (for-profit) **businesses and other** types of organisations or individuals and to allow encounters/cross-over between the two;
- To reach out **beyond the 'usual suspects'** (emerging creators, individuals and smaller organisations with a good potential development but which lacks access to other markets etc.);
- To address the **specificities of the different CCI sub-sectors** and to encourage **different mobility formats when needed**.

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[3]   https://www.creativeports.eu/tools-resources/policy-recommendations

At the level of the BSR countries, a **more comprehensive approach** is needed in line with the changed imposed and/or exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation:

- To support cultural mobility funding schemes that would **not focus only on events** but also on prospection, research, collaborations and cross-sectoral projects for instance;
- To support **digital mobility** (including technical equipment, new types of costs and **training** for the sector as there are huge discrepancies with regards to technology in the CCI sector);
- To support mobility funding that would enable **learning working conditions, culture tendencies and social structures** in the visited places;
- To support more **environment friendly forms of mobilities** that are also **more inclusive, accessible** (creators with disabilities, family support when traveling for longer periods etc.).

At the level of the BSR countries, an even **more partnership-based approach** is needed:

- To encourage or further support **existing funding schemes** particularly at a regional level (including Nordic Culture Point, Baltic Culture Fund but also **new funding schemes to be launched** like the one being developed by NDPC/EUNIC). This seems relevant in a time where budget cuts are expected;
- To work on or encourage the **implementation of mobility funding schemes that are simple but efficient and contextualised** in terms of formats, access and implementation (to tackle a more current challenge of funding schemes that answer a complex context with complex forms of solution);
- To encourage the **set-up of mobility funding routes** for countries not fully including particularly for Russia and Poland;
- To test **partnerships at the European level** where mobility funding schemes are supported (I-Portunus, ERASMUS for Young Entrepreneurs etc.).

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b) Knowledge and information accessibility

Two forms of recommendations can be first formulated and further analysed/expanded:

At a macro level:
- There is a crucial need to continue to work with organisations/networks/platforms to combine expertise and knowledge that are relevant and up-to-date for the CCI sector in the BSR countries (including through the strong/membership based partnership between ARS BALTICA and On the Move);
- There is a crucial need to fully optimise the information provision system that can/could be even more developed at the level of the BSR countries;
- There is a key need, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic not only to connect information access with communication and related capacity building programmes, but also to embed environmental, diversity, accessibility issues in the way information is presented.

At a micro and contextualised level, there seems to be a crucial need:
- To support under the format of a revised comprehensive BSR mobility and cooperation guide access to information that fits with the diversity of the CCI sector;
- To support through the 11 BSR contact-points the access to information in local/national language(s) and related information (on legal questions, EU funding etc.);
- To support the dissemination of information through regular and translated communication formats when needed;
- To support information sessions and related capacity programmes to encourage more actors to be part of mobility related projects in order to fully benefit from the said experiences. These should be taking place as priority in less covered regions or countries that are part of the overall BSR.
- To regularly assess how the information provided is benefiting the end users and having an impact on the overall CCI sector.

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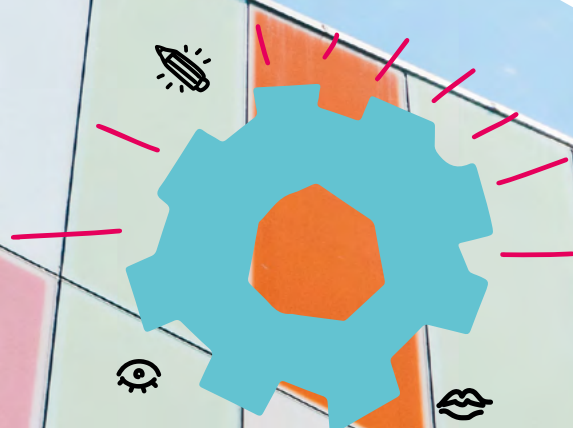
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