

CASE STUDY REPORT //

**HERIWELL – Cultural Heritage as
a Source of Societal Well-being in
European Regions**

ECOC MONS 2015 (Belgium)

Long term vision and cultural strategy for cultural
heritage

Annex VII // June 2022

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Abbreviations

BE	Belgium
BC	Bruxelles-Capitale
CCI	Cultural and Creative Industries
CCS	Cultural and Creative Sectors
CH	Cultural Heritage
CoE	Council of Europe
DCH	Digital cultural heritage
DE	Germany
DG EAC	Directorate-General for Education and Culture
EAFRD	European Agricultural and Rural Development Fund
EC	European Commission
ECOC	European Capitals of Culture
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
ESPON EGTC	ESPON European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
FR	France
GDP	Gross domestic product
HERIWELL	Short name for the ESPON project 'Cultural Heritage as a Source of Societal Well-being in European Regions'
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
JPI	Joint Programming Initiative
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (or queer)
MCH	Material Cultural Heritage
MS	Member States
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OP	Operational Programme
RW	Region wallonne
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWB	Societal Well-Being
SWB SD	Societal Well-Being Sub-dimension
TCH	Tangible Cultural Heritage
TO	Thematic Objective
ToC	Theory of Change
UCH	UNESCO Cultural Heritage
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UOE	UNESCO OECD Eurostat

Executive summary

The case of the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) Mons 2015 is interesting for the HERIWELL research project due to its relevant impact on societal wellbeing (SWB). The theory of change (ToC) in the social, economic and cultural fabric of the city can be well studied as it stretches from the early 2000's for almost two decades.

As it will be detailed later on, three societal well-being factors (SWB and SWB Sub Dimensions) have been identified as being relevant for this case study:

- **Societal cohesion** – considerable improvement through a broader cultural offer triggered by investments in cultural heritage (CH) in the region, active participation in cultural events by local citizens, and a reinforced sense of belonging and local/regional identity;
- **Material conditions** – improvement through new employment possibilities by embedding the cultural strategy into a wider strategy of economic reconversion of the region focused on digital transformation. In addition, economic benefits for the hospitality sector (cafes, restaurants, hotels) due to higher attractiveness of the region for tourists;
- **Quality of Life** – with both of above SWBs and additional investments in urban development and safety, the quality of life of citizens was incrementally improved as well.

To better understand the relevant linkages, the historical, political, economic and cultural relevance of the ECoC action will be briefly outlined.

Mons is the first Walloon city (BE) which submitted the challenging bid for the title of ECoC. Compared to other Belgian ECoC cities situated in Flanders, such as Antwerp in 1993 (important rich historic port-city) and ECoC Brugge in 2002 (world-known UNESCO labelled old town) as well as EU capital Brussels (2000), Mons faced severe economic and social challenges when it entered the competition.

These challenges are of great relevance to understand the impact of ECoC Mons 2015 and the repercussions on its citizens.

Firstly, Mons suffered from a persisting, very dire economic situation since the mid-20th century. Due to economic downturn in the mining industry since the mid-20th century, this region in Wallonia was facing severe social and economic hardship. This decline and the loss of heavy industry manifested themselves in high social and income disparities (especially compared to Flanders since the 2000's) and very high unemployment rates.

Second, although very rich in cultural heritage, the financial difficulties were reflected in the lack of care and renovation in the creative (CCS) and cultural heritage (CH) sector. One example is the heritage landmark site of Mons, the "Beffroi", which since 1983 was closed for public due to ongoing renovations for almost 30 years.¹

Third, the economic hardship was heavily felt among the citizens, the Montois, resulting in a lack of positive identification with their home town and region. Therefore, the application for ECoC presented for Mons, like for other European cities in a similar situation such as ECoC's Glasgow, Genoa and Lille, the unique opportunity to prepare and showcase artistic and cultural projects aimed at changing the image of the city and perception of its citizens towards their own cultural heritage and identity.²

¹ Mons has today five UNESCO World Heritage protected sites: its belfry, the Spiennes mines, Grand Hornu, Mundaneum and the festival of Doudou. <https://www.visitmons.co.uk/see-do/top-sights/10-top-reasons-to-fall-in-love-with-mons/unesco>

² PAMART, Céline "Quels contours identitaires pour la ville les événements culturels montois et leur promotion redéfinissent-ils ? " Faculté des sciences économiques, sociales, politiques et de communication, Université catholique de Louvain, 2020. Prom. : Vanneste, Damien ; p. 14. <http://hdl.handle.net/2078.1/thesis:25048>

Finally, as a comparatively small-scale Belgian city (ca. 90.000 Inhabitants), located in a bordering region with France, it is off the main European cross-roads, grand central train stations and global airports. Other than world famous Brugge or international port city of Antwerp, it had, certainly outside Belgium, a low recognition potential and a limited international visibility in terms of its CH. This was a challenging aspect for its ECoC bid and a lot of groundwork to be done in terms of communication to local, regional, national and EU audiences to turn this ambition into a success.

Notwithstanding these challenging conditions, the ECoC application was considered by the local and regional government and relevant stakeholders as a “game changing” opportunity. The objective was to use ECoC as an important leverage to attract different sources of public and private funding, put Mons on the cultural and tourist map as well as convert its old industrial image into a modern one.³ Having learnt from the experience of close-by ECoC cities such as Lille and Luxembourg, Yves Vasseur, head of the cultural programme (Fondation Mons 2015) and Elio di Rupo, the mayor of Mons, launched the broader reconversion strategy and the simultaneous ECoC bid already in the early 2000s to pursue economic transformation and “rebranding” of Mons via ECoC.⁴

In this sense, the municipal strategy of 2007 was clear by stating the key objective of ECoC Mons 2015, namely to “*raise its international profile and attract international visitors as well as investments for job creation*”.⁵ To this end, the strategy embedded ECoC in a wider economic development strategy to transform the industrial Hainaut region with a strong focus on the creative and digital economies.⁶

The ECoC bid was also linked to achieving relevant social objectives, namely the “*wellbeing and empowerment of its citizens*”.⁷ In terms of SWB, the identification of societal problems and putting them in the centre of social and economic policies as of the early 2000’s was most relevant for Mons and its residents in terms of concrete benefits.

The ECoC year 2015 was in every respect a culmination of cultural activities and a big commercial success for the region. Mons was successfully placed on the European cultural and tourist map. Its cultural programme received very positive reviews from national and international outlets. Large recognition from abroad, excellent press communication by Fondation Mons 2015, and joint cultural collaboration projects with other nearby cities such as Lille and Liege worked to the benefit of the whole region. A high number of high-quality cultural offer across sectors was staged, from blockbuster exhibitions to attract the international public to smaller cultural initiatives. Especially the latter were popular among the locals. Some of them are kept alive until today, thanks to engagement of local people in Mons neighborhoods, bringing continued sense of belonging and connection.

Altogether, the economic reconversion strategy and its integrated ECoC bid were undeniably a success resulting in positive economic and social impacts for the city of Mons, thus improving the quality of life of its citizens.

With respect to the sustainability of results in the post-ECoC period, the local government of Mons underlined in its 2016-2018 programme the importance of follow-up activities and put in place the new Fondation Mons

³ PAMART, p. 14

⁴ Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) 2010-2016. Final Report <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/resources/evaluations>

⁵ LEROY, Robert. L’impact de la politique culturelle de l’Union européenne sur le sentiment d’appartenance et donc d’identité des citoyens européens: le cas de Mons comme Capitale européenne de la culture.. Faculté des sciences économiques, sociales, politiques et de communication, Université catholique de Louvain, 2018, p. 46-47 Prom. : Denuit, Renaud. <http://hdl.handle.net/2078.1/thesis:16200LEROY>

⁶ ECoC, post eval, p. 141-2

⁷ Ville de Mons Programme de législature 2007 – 2012, p.4 <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/07-12.pdf>

2025 to keep up with “*the necessary groundwork for a new and better model of life and society, relying on creativity, new technologies and citizen participation*”.⁸

However, it has also become clear that since ECoC 2015 policy priorities have shifted and the budget for supporting the cultural sector has diminished. The role of the cultural sector and cultural heritage is now focused on mainly attracting more tourists and serving the local tourism sector. This may however not be sufficient to ensure the long-term transformational impact of ECoC 2015.

In terms of lessons learnt and policy recommendations, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Mons successful ECoC 2015 bid was part of a wider development strategy for the city and region. It was adopted long before the ECoC title-year to ensure proper preparation and secure the necessary funding. It was built around a broad local and regional coalition supporting this initiative comprising the political, economic and cultural sector. Stable political support combined with a strong and experienced organisation team ensured a well-functioning governance structure to carry out the preparatory work. Another success factor was the early involvement and participation of the local level (citizens, artists, business etc.) in ECoC 2015 which created a strong sense of ownership and support among the local population.

While Mons put in place a strategy for the post 2015 years maintaining some of the ECoC activities, the financial sustainability of supported interventions remains a critical issue. This is due on the one hand to the weak interest of the private sector in cultural investments that do not provide an immediate economic return, and on the other hand to the fact that such interventions are less likely to produce the necessary income to cover all of their costs. It may therefore be necessary to revert other forms of financing (e.g., fund raising, donations) to ensure the long-term legacy of ECoC Mons 2015.

⁸ Ville de Mons Programme de majorité 2016-2018, p. 1 <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/16-18.pdf>

Introduction

The heritage resource in the focus of this case study is the tangible (TCH) and intangible (ICH) cultural heritage of the Belgian city of Mons and its surrounding Borinage area. In connection with the particular case of the ECoC Mons 2015 the following aspects will be considered:

- 1) **Cultural:** Economic and social leverage potential of ECoC in renovation and revitalisation of CH with respect (re: SWB material conditions, societal cohesion and quality of life, SWB SD Territorial attractiveness and branding)
 - rebranding of the city of Mons (from post-industrial to cultural hot-spot)
 - putting the city on the European cultural map and attracting international visitors
 - increasing its potential to generate jobs in (cultural) tourism
- 2) **Social:** Increase of identification and reinforcing the identity of its citizens through (re: SWB societal cohesion and quality of life, SWB SD Cultural diversity and Place identity and symbolic representation)
 - demonstrating the richness of tangible and intangible CH in Mons in the newly created/renovated cultural infrastructures to citizens and visitors (tourists)
 - increased and active citizens participation and interest in CH through ECoC 2015 cultural activities
- 3) **Economic:** ECoC potential to attract and justify increased CH financing with public (national and EU) funds to achieve the cultural regeneration of the city and region (re: SWB material conditions) and its potential to generate jobs (SWB SD Jobs and earnings)

The methodology used for this study involved:

- Desk research:
 - EU-level literature (EU policy and legislative briefings, papers, decisions and other documents relating to ECoC)
 - Academic research regarding the ECoC Action and the role of culture and CH in the development of cities.
- Online interviews, workshops and personal conversations with:
 - Fondation Mons 2015 stakeholders
 - Fondation Mons 2025 stakeholders
 - Post ECoC study key researcher
- Field trip to ECoC site, archive Fondation Mons 2015 and visit of UNESCO sites in Mons
- Final workshop with the validation of results
- Data analysis from local, regional, national and EU sources including Ex-Post ECoC evaluations

Detailed information on sources is provided in the footnotes of the next chapters as well as in bibliography at the end of this Case Study.

1 The context features

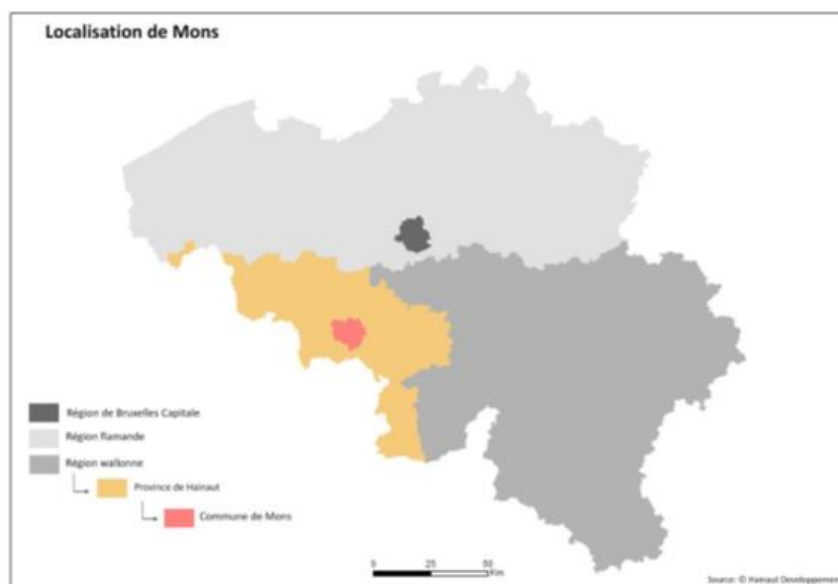
Below information is provided on the territorial and CH context of the analysed case ECoC Mons 2015. It reflects on features relevant for the analysed case, CH resources, main policies and initiatives promoted (including EU funding), as well as major cultural and political actors involved in them and SWB features of the analysed context.

1.1 Territorial context

The municipality of Mons is located in the center of the Belgian province of Hainaut, halfway between the capital Brussels and the French city of Lille.⁹ With its ca. 95.600¹⁰ inhabitants Mons is a small regional town situated at the eastern end of an area of Wallonia known as the Borinage.

The current municipality is made up of 19 entities: Mons, Ghlin, Flénu, Jemappes, Maisières, Nimy, Havré, Harmignies, Harveng, Hyon, Mesvin, Nouvelles, Cibly, Saint-Symphorien, Villers-Saint-Ghislain, Spiennes, Cuesmes, Obourg and Saint-Denis. In total, it covers an area of 14,756 ha for a population of 95,613 inhabitants, which gives an average density of 648 inhab./km².

Map 1.1. Location of Mons (red), Hainaut (yellow), Wallonia (dark grey), Belgium



Source: Mons – fiche communale 2020

The Borinage comprises around thirty municipalities that were for centuries already reliant on coal mining. With the 19th century the character of "*small coal mining business*" disappeared and big coal companies developed in the area. While in the beginnings the coal industry was mainly oriented towards domestic consumption it shifted then to big production and export. The beginnings of the decline of the coal industry were already felt in the 1930s, during the "great crisis".¹¹ Since the closure of the last mine in the 1960's, the Borinage has suffered industrial decline and was ever since associated with problems of social disparities

⁹ Mons – fiche communale (2020), p. 6 <https://www.hainaut-developpement.be/documents/hainautstat/Mons.pdf>

¹⁰https://www.ibz.rn.fgov.be/fileadmin/user_upload/fr/pop/statistiques/population-bevolking-20210101.pdf
<https://statbel.fgov.be/en/themes/population/structure-population>

¹¹ HONOREZ, Myriam, " Une région de tradition industrielle : Mons – Borinage", Bulletin de la Société Géographique de Liège, 30, 1994, 86

and high unemployment. Although Mons is within the Borinage, it has traditionally had a somewhat different cultural and sociological identity from the other parts of the Borinage, in part because it is also a university town.¹²

In terms of territorial focus, the ECoC 2015 application itself, foresaw four concentric circles with Mons at the centre:

- Mons/Borinage: (200,000 inhabitants) including Mons and the nineteen peripheral communes and the rest of the Borinage;
- Mons/Hainaut: (1.3m inhabitants) including the current Province of Hainaut, as well as those parts of modern-day France that were within the historical County of Hainaut (Comté de Hainaut).
- Adjoining partner towns within the French Community (mostly within the Wallonia and Brussels regions), Flemish Community (mostly within Flanders and Brussels regions) and the Nord département within France.¹³
- Region Nord/Pas de Calais, Netherlands, Ruhr (Germany) and Luxembourg: connecting especially previous ECoC cities such as Lille (2004), Luxembourg (2007) and Essen (2010).¹⁴

Map 1.2. Connections to other regions and countries as envisaged by EcoC - Fondation Mons 2015



Source: Fondation Mons 2015 – brochure ECoC Mons 2015, https://issuu.com/mons-2015/docs/mons2015_preprogramme_base_290914_v_e2ffe4e4a4606a

¹² "Ex post Evaluation of the 2015 European Capitals of Culture. Final Report. A study prepared for the European Commission by Ecorys and the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES)", Tim FOX (Ecorys), James RAMPTON (CSES), Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), November 2016, p. 24

¹³ Even before Mons 2015, the city already knew a certain internationalism, in view of its collaboration with its French neighbor. For instance, in the French town of Maubeuge, "Manège" theatre scene was born, under the leadership of Didier Fusillier. Throughout the 1990s, this had a unprecedented success in the North of France, and also, in large part, in Belgium, LEROY, p. 45

¹⁴ DG EAC, Ex post, p. 27

1.2 Cultural heritage context

1.2.1 Forms of cultural heritage (tangible, intangible, digital, mixed CH) and CH resources in the area (local/regional)

The Hainaut region and the city of Mons are situated in a region historically very rich in CH resources. Due to the economic context mentioned above, the high potential of this rich CH was for a long time widely unrecognized.

The variety of CH of the Mons and Borinage region spans not over centuries but millennia. The first signs of cultural activity were found at the mines of Spiennes, where some of the most valuable flint tools from the Neolithic period were excavated.¹⁵ In Roman times, the region was settled and a castrum (fortress) was built as a military defensive structure. Being built on a mountain top, the castrum gave the city its name, Montes (today Mons). During the Middle Ages, Mons flourished as a centre for trade and commerce and became the capital of the County of Hainaut. Like Ath, its neighbouring city to the north-west, Mons was made a fortified city in the 12th century. Over the following centuries the city fell under different European rulers, which left traces in the rich cultural heritage of the city and region. In 1830, however, as Belgium gained its independence, the decision was made to dismantle fortified Belgian cities such as Mons, Charleroi, and Namur and expand *extra-muros*. The actual removal of fortifications only happened in the 1860s, allowing the creation of large boulevards and buildings, according to the urbanistic fashion of the times, destroying much of the medieval cores and small city streets. In this respect, Mons was very much like other larger European cities of the time following the example of Paris (“Haussmannisation”).

The Industrial Revolution in the 19th century and expansion of the coal mining business made Mons a centre of polluting heavy industry, which strongly influenced its CH and impacted the image of the Borinage region as a whole. Moreover, the region was in the centre of heavy conflicts of the WW I and WW II. For instance, in Summer 1914, Mons was the location of the great Battle of Mons, which was the first battle fought by the British Army in World War I. During the WW II, as an important industrial centre, the city was heavily bombed. After the war, most of these industries went into an economic decline.

Figure 1.1. World War I photo of war-damaged Mons following its recapture by Canadian troops on Nov. 11, 1918



Source: Archives of the Canadian War Museum, <https://www.warmuseum.ca/learn/research-collections/>

¹⁵ <http://www.minesdespiennes.org/>

A relevant number of important historic buildings of the old town has however survived the damage sustained during the WW II. In terms of tangible cultural heritage one of the most relevant landmarks of the city of Mons is certainly the town hall, which is bearing witness to architectural style changes from the Gothic, Renaissance to the 19th century neogothic styles. However, the pride of the Montois is linked to the Baroque belfry (“Beffroi”) from the 17th century, which under construction for three decades, classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999, was reopened just in time for the festivities of ECoC Mons2015.¹⁶

Figure 1.2. UNESCO TCH monument Belfry (“Beffroi”) – prior and after restauration



Source: <http://www.beffroi.mons.be/>

The other relevant CH landmark is the collegiate Church of St. Waudru (Saint Waltrude), who is the patron saint of Mons. The patron is most relevant for the Montois as she plays a relevant part in the “Doudou” (Ducasse) festivities. It is a one-week festival dating back to the 14th century and takes place every year on the Trinity Sunday. One of the highlights is the “Lumeçon”, a re-enactment of the fight between St George and the dragon. The dragon, “la Biète” to the people of Mons, is the symbol of social disorder, which Saint-George is battling as the guarantor of order and continuity. Since 2005 the Doudou is recognised by UNESCO as a “Masterpiece of the oral and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of humanity”.¹⁷

Figure 1.3. UNESCO (ICH) Doudou, 19th century and Doudou 21th century



Source: <http://www.museedudoudou.mons.be>

¹⁶ UNESCO World Heritage, “Belfries of Belgium and France”, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/943/>

¹⁷ <https://www.wallonia.be/en/news/mons-2015-european-capital-of-culture>

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/belgium/le-musee-du-doudou-valorise-la-ducasse-rituelle-de-mons-et-la-legende-de-saint-georges

1.2.2 Main national/regional/local policies adopted in the field of cultural heritage related to the cultural heritage policy/strategy

The regional and local policies relating to the CH renovation have started much prior to the ECoC year.

On the regional level the ground stone was laid as early as 1999 and was related to efforts for CH renovation in line with the Walloon strategy. It was laid down in the so-called **contract for the future** (« Contrat d'avenir pour la Wallonie ») and it called the Walloons for the **mobilization of civil society around a “positive vision of the future”**. This coordinated plan aimed to achieve two major objectives by 2010:

- to reach the European average in terms of employment rate
- to achieve a level of wealth creation per capita comparable to the European average

For the years from **2006-2009 a Priority Action Plan** was envisioned (colloquially called the “Plan Marshall”) and adopted in August 2005 with a budget of € 1.1 billion. Its main objective was to carry out as a priority the essential reforms to foster economic recovery, offer support for Wallonia’s competitiveness and therefore job creation. Finally, from **2010-2014** – period just prior to the ECoC Mons 2015 – the Plan Marshall 2. vert¹⁸ (Marshall Plan 2. Green) was put in place with a budget of 2.75 billion € (including 1.15 billion in alternative financing). It was structured around 6 priority axes, among them 2 are to be highlighted for the SWB context of HERIWELL:

- **Human capital, an asset to be valued:** continuation of reforms, in particular for the development of lifelong learning and reinforced articulation between education, training, employment and economic policies
- **Combining employment and societal well-being:** policies to support employment in local services.

Finally, the **2014-2019 Policy strategy** of Walloon government “*Oser, Innover, Rassembler*”¹⁹ (“*Dare, Innovate, Bring Together*”) was even more concretely aimed to support the regional tourism strategy with respect to the main CH and natural assets of the Wallonia. It included natural sites (in particular forest massifs, bodies of water and valleys and natural parks) as well as cities with a historical, cultural or heritage interest, (in particular the UNESCO sites), cultural and folklore events (ICH) as well as gastronomy.

In the timeframe of the 2014-2019 policy four major cultural events have taken place and were aimed to further develop the cultural and tourist offer:

- Mons 2015 European Capital of Culture
- 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo
- Centenary of the WW I
- 70th anniversary of the Battle of Ardennes.

For the **period 2014-2019** the Walloon Region aimed to put at the heart of their policy “*to act in daily and intensive partnership between all the forces that want to contribute to the economic, social and environmental transition: citizens, entrepreneurs, associations, and finally, the public authorities*” (p. 155).

On the local, municipal level the policies adopted in the field of CH and SWB were clearly visible as of 2004 and clearly geared towards the 10-year target of obtaining the title of ECoC in 2015.

The Mons mayor Rupo announced in January 2005 the decision to bid for the ECoC title.²⁰ It was made clear that a wider development of the town (“projet de ville”) is to be based on research, consultation of experts, statistical analysis and an exchange of ideas. In the 5-year municipal strategy for Mons (2007-12) the clear

¹⁸ <https://economie.wallonie.be/content/plan-marshall-2vert>

¹⁹ <https://www.refernet.be/news/10-publications/245-publication-osser-innover-rassembleur-2014-2019>

²⁰ PROCES-VERBAL DE LA SEANCE DU CONSEIL COMMUNAL DU 28 FEVRIER 2005, <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/conseil-communal/ordres-du-jour-et-proces-verbaux/archives/2005/conseil-2005-02-28/pv-28-fevrier-05.pdf>

focus was on **“wellbeing and empowerment of its citizens”**.²¹ This objective could be met by initiatives promoting the creation of new jobs, through a new educational and cultural policy as well as an appropriate social policy. The **Quality of life** was another significant objective focusing on prevention, security and public cleanliness actions as well as improvement of shared public spaces in the 19 municipalities (in line with the prospect of ECoC Mons). Finally, the key objective of Mons 2015 was to raise its international profile and attract international visitors as well as investments for job creation.²²

The following **municipal strategy 2013-18**²³ was building further and deeper on the ECoC challenge for revitalisation. The municipal authorities have aimed to continue further contributing to economic recovery and increasing societal wellbeing for the citizens of Mons. Once the ECoC candidacy was accepted in 2010²⁴ and Mons chosen to represent Belgium, the municipal strategy grew clearer and more detailed. Improving **Quality of life** of its citizens moved further into focus and was another significant objective to be obtained along with the cultural and economic one.

ECoC Mons 2015 was to be implemented by a dedicated delivery agency, the public utility Foundation Mons 2015. It was overseen by the four main public authorities (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, Région wallonne, Province de Hainaut, Ville de Mons). Those bodies, as well as the municipalities and communes of the Borinage, offered strong political support to the overarching cultural project. The four main authorities committed 68% of the proposed budget at an early stage and fulfilled the large part of this commitment.²⁵

1.2.3 Funding resources allocated to regional and local CH with a particular focus on EU funds

With a 10-year target ECoC Mons clearly defined, as of 2007 the use of ERDF funding was clearly part of the concept of the **Mons municipal strategy (2007-2012)** for the sustainable revitalisation of the city and region. A strategic and proactive approach was taken to **“benefit the region and its inhabitants to a maximum degree”**.²⁶ As of 2013 the impact of ERDF funding is even more reflected in the municipal strategy. It is positively noted that Mons is **“developing thanks to continued investments made possible with European funds for which the City has consulted a lot with its teams of engineers and architects”**.²⁷

Therefore, with the long view taken on ECoC 2015, there was a range of new or renovated cultural and tourist infrastructures funded already under the **ERDF framework programme (2007-13)**. For instance, total investment for the “ARSONIC – This Listening House” project was EUR 6 250 131, of which the EU’s European Regional Development Fund contributed EUR 1 583 953 under the Operational Programme (OP) “Convergence”.²⁸

In the framework of the **ERDF programme (2014-2020)** a very high percentage of funding for Wallonia went almost exclusively to the Province of Hainaut and more directly to Ville de Mons (see ANNEX, Table I). Namely, 12 big infrastructure projects were directly funded via ERDF with a total of € 46.862.243,38, while one project was funded under ESF with € 1.555.000,00. In comparison, the much richer region of Flanders

²¹ Ville de Mons Programme de législature 2007 – 2012, p.4 <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/07-12.pdf>

²² LEROY, p. 46-47

²³ Ville de Mons Programme de législature 2013-2018, p. 22-23 <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/13-18.pdf>

²⁴ The final selection meeting took place in Brussels in February 2010 when the Selection Panel recommended Mons for the ECoC 2015 title. https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/files/ecoc-2015-second-monitoring_en.pdf, p.2

²⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/2021-07/ecoc-2015-evaluation_en.pdf, p.3

²⁶ Ville de Mons (2007–2012), p.3 <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/07-12.pdf>

²⁷ Ville de Mons (2013-2018), p. 22-23 <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/13-18.pdf>

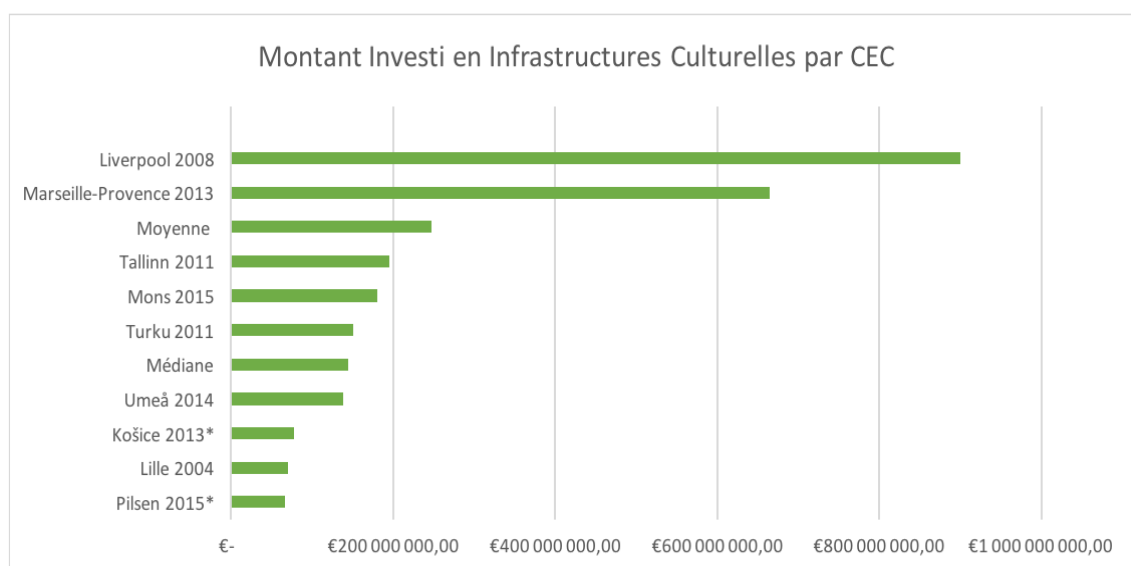
²⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/belgium/arsonic-un-espace-novateur-entierement-dedie-au-son

had no projects funded under ERDF and Bruxelles-Capitale was allocated the comparably low € 16.6 million for the period 2014-2020. It is thus clear, that most of the Structural Funds allocations for the whole period 2014-20 not only went to Wallonia, but more specifically to the City of Mons for a huge infrastructural make-over.

Compared to other ECoC candidates, prior to Mons2015, the Walloon city did not seem to be under the biggest investors overall. However, up to that point and relative to the size of the city, Mons 2015 was the leader for infrastructure investment per capita €1,800 per inhabitant. This is more than twice the average amount invested by ECoCs from 2010-15 (700 euros per capita).²⁹

The city was able to limit its financial risk by using regional and European funds. It should be stressed that the city of Mons only invested 3 million euros out of the total investment of 70 million euros – less than 5%. Overall, it can be stated, that the ERDF funds were the main drivers of CH investment.

Figure 1.4. Value of investments in cultural and tourism infrastructure compared to previous ECoC investments



Source: KEA - Evaluation Mons 2015 – Capitale Européenne de la Culture, p.30 <https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Mons2015-Rapport-IV-final-19072016-LD.pdf>

1.3 Societal well-being context

Although already for some years big political efforts were aimed at improving the societal well-being in Mons and Borinage communities, still in 2007 the municipal strategy outlines the following dire situation for its citizens:

*“Unfortunately, for reasons linked to the industrial past of the region, (Mons) still conceals disadvantaged places where part of the population lives in conditions close to poverty. Mons has not yet been able to enjoy general prosperity that could have brought well-being to all of its inhabitants. The unemployment rate is also dramatically high.”*³⁰

After the EU framework period of 2007-13 where national and EU funds were invested in the local and cultural infrastructures as well as plans implemented to attract global companies to procure jobs and foster economic development, the municipal strategy 2014-18 reflects on some of the successes. For the first time in the Mons-Borinage region, large multinational companies have set up in Mons, providing hundreds of

²⁹ "Mons 2015 - European Capital of Culture. Demystifying the risk of cultural investment. Final report. Assessment of the impact of Mons 2016 (JULY 2016)", KEA, Brussels, 2016, p.9

³⁰ <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/07-12.pdf>, p.1

jobs. The efforts to attract these high-tech companies, for which the City of Mons had created the concept of "Digital Innovation Valley", have clearly offered some dividends in terms of rise of employment.

*"The desire is to continue to make the city attractive in order to attract investors in order to create new jobs, particularly through Digital Innovation Valley and the Initialis Park, which already has 60 companies and nearly 700 jobs, a desire materialized by the extension of zoning and the creation of 2,000 jobs in the long term."*³¹

With a view to foster innovation and targeted public funds investment hi-tech companies, including Google, Microsoft, IBM, Hewlett-Packard and Cisco settled. Also, the municipality has established a centre for higher education, being host to the Conservatoire royal de Mons, the Facultés universitaires catholiques de Mons, the Université de Mons, the Institut Reine Astrid Mons and TechnocITé, a competence centre in ICT and digital media.³²

Aspects of clean and **green public spaces** as well as **security measures** were proposed to improve the wellbeing of the citizens. Another relevant aspect was linked to the willingness of the authorities to support civil grass roots associations and NGO's by putting municipal premises at their disposal for the gatherings of **civil society** and support for associations was to be strengthened.

It is also important to highlight that with the perspective of the ECoC Mons 2015 the municipal authorities have aimed not simply and generally to create more jobs, but more specifically to create jobs in the culture sector.

*"First of all, we will ensure that Mons, European Capital of Culture in 2015, (will be) generating local jobs in partnership with local training and employment players. We will also set up **new training courses specific to professions linked to culture.**"*³³

It is clear that the city of Mons and its citizens benefitted hugely from the ECoC title. This can be seen not only in the successful effort of rebranding, but also more tangibly in the creation of new jobs linked to hi-tech industries.

However, according to the latest statistics, it can be stated that while the region of Hainaut and specifically Mons have improved slightly, compared to the low baseline in the early 2000's, the overall economic development has followed to a large extent the one of Wallonia in general and Belgium overall. While total employment has increased in the region from 418.000 people in 2000 to 470.000 people in 2020, the employment rate (15-64 years) increased by 4.5 percentage points over the same period (from 50.5% to 55%) and thus stays far below the national level (64.7% in 2020).³⁴

Compared to the high aims set by the municipal authorities to reach by 2010 the European average in terms of employment rate and level of wealth creation per capita comparable to the European average, this ambitious goal has failed to be reached until today. The median income in Mons was calculated € 21,372 in 2017. It was comparable to that of the province Hainaut (- € 310), but lower than those of Wallonia (- € 1,477), Flanders (- € 4,647) and Belgium in general (- € 2,973). The unemployment rate in Mons for the year 2019 was 14.7%, which remained also higher than that of other regions (Hainaut, Wallonia, Flanders and Belgium). Also, between 2018 and 2019, the unemployment rate increased slightly in Mons, from 14.5% to 14.7%. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of welfare recipients (4,591 in 2018) increased by 57.1% in Mons. This increase is 70.9% in Hainaut, 57.5% in Wallonia and 48.4% in Belgium. It shows a relatively constant increase in the number of beneficiaries of welfare (fr. RIS) until 2014.

³¹ <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/13-18.pdf>

³² DG EAC Ex-Post, p.30

³³ <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/07-12.pdf>, p. 9

³⁴ <https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/my-place/en?is=Default&ts=EU&tl=2&tu=BE32&dtype=udpp&d=32>

The economic crisis that appeared in 2008 and the reform of unemployment benefits in 2015 are factors that had significantly influenced the number of welfare beneficiaries. Finally, the mortality rate,³⁵ an important indicator for the societal wellbeing, is not very favourable with regard to the Wallonia or Belgium in general.³⁶





Table 1.1. Societal well-being indicators

	Local (if available)		Regional		National		EU - 28	
	2020	Δ% 2014	2020	Δ% 2014	2020	Δ% 2014	2020	Δ% 2014
Total Population (number)	259.406	0,7	1.350.295	1,2	11.522.440	3,1	513.093.556	1,2
Population over 65 (number)	48.356	11,5	254.636	10,4	2.204.642	10,6	102.655.668	9,2
Upper-secondary educational enrolment (number of students)	n.a.	n.a.	89.277	3,6	752.568	-2,7	19.425.829	-11,6
Early leavers from education and training (%)	n.a.	n.a.	12,7	-1,4	8,1	-1,7	10,3	-0,7
Tertiary educational enrolment (number of students)	n.a.	n.a.	42.952	16,2	512.097	3,3	18.438.720	n.a.
Adult (25-64) participation rate in education and training (%)	n.a.	n.a.	3,6	-0,7	7,4	0,0	11,3	0,5
Net migration rate (per 1 000 persons)	2,4	-0,6	4,1	1,5	5,0	1,8	3,2	1,1
Gross domestic product (GDP) at current market prices	26.900	19,0	26.000	13,0	41.400	15,0	31200 (EU27)	17,3
Working age population (number)	167.207	-1,0	865.012	-0,3	7.375.684	1,2	330.714.969	-1,0
Employment rate (%)	n.a.	n.a.	55	2,3	64,7	2,8	69,2	4,4
Unemployment rate (%)	n.a.	n.a.	8,4	-6,1	5,6	-3,0	6,4	-4,0
Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (age 15-29) - NEET rate (%)	n.a.	n.a.	17,2	-3,7	12,0	-2,1	12,5	-2,9
Gender employment gap (M-F)	n.a.	n.a.	6,9	0,1	7,4	-0,5	10,3	-0,2
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (%)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	18,9	-2,3	21,4	-3,0
Severely materially deprived people (%)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3,9	-2,0	5,5	-3,4
Life expectancy at birth (years)	n.a.	n.a.	79,6	+0,7y	80,9	-0,5y	81,0	+0,1y
Subjective health status (good + very good)	n.a.	n.a.	74,5	n.a.	75,4	-1,1	69,3	1,8
Volunteering	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	32,2	n.a.	34,1 (EU27)	n.a.
Satisfaction with water quality	n.a.	n.a.	0,79	n.a.	0,76	n.a.	0,8 (EU27)	n.a.
Burdensome cost of housing	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	26,5	-3,6	28,2	-8,5
Overcrowding	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5,7	3,7	15,6	-1,1
Crime level	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	10,8	-5,4	12,5	-1,5
Internet at home	n.a.	n.a.	87	13	91	8	90	9
Internet access	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0,90	n.a.	0,86 (EU27)	n.a.
Broadband at home (% of households)	n.a.	n.a.	87	14	91	10	89	11
Online interaction with public authorities (% of individuals)	n.a.	n.a.	53	9	61	6	55	8
Trust in the national government	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0,33	n.a.	0,43 (EU27)	n.a.
Institution quality index	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0,64	n.a.	-0,01 (EU27)	n.a.
Freedom over life choices	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0,77	n.a.	0,82 (EU27)	n.a.
Tolerance towards immigrants, minorities, homosexuals	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0,69	n.a.	0,61 (EU27)	n.a.

³⁵ <https://laprovince.sudinfo.be/857494/article/2021-10-25/mons-borinage-meurt-plus-jeune-quailleurs-voici-les-chiffres-de-votre-commune>

³⁶ <https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/my-place/en?is=Default&ts=EU&tl=2&tu=BE32&dtype=udpp&d=163>

Mons-Fiche communal (2020) <https://www.mons.be/vivre-a-mons/territoire/environnement/biodiversite/pcdn/situation-geo-et-socio-eco-pcdn.pdf>

	Last available data: 2019	Case study information: - Location: Mons - NUTS3 level: BE323 - Arr. Mons - NUTS2 level: BE32 - Prov. Hainaut
	Last available data: 2018	
	Last available data: 2015	
	Last available data: 2017	

Source: HERIWELL team

2 The analysed case ECoC Mons 2015: characteristics and policy features

2.1 Characteristics and history of ECoC Mons 2015

2.1.1 Overall ECoC objective

The ECoC Mons2015 programme was quite tellingly articulated around the theme of the "Metamorphosis",³⁷ a path of change which indeed was pursued by political, economic and cultural actors for more than a decade at that point. Suitably it aimed to reflect the incremental change of the city's identity and in line with performing a political and economic pivot towards innovation and hi-tech technologies (away from traditional heavy industry) by using the enormous potential of its cultural heritage for its realisation.

The ECoC year was also understood as a bridge or facilitator for Mons citizens (and visitors) to approach new technologies via art and vice-versa. Therefore, in the decade prior to ECoC a focus of the municipality was also on management and improvement of digital technology literacy and skills as well as improving social (media) networking. While fostering a sense of a more European identity, the strategy was to push forward with digitisation of CH (making it more widely available to audiences) and preservation of digital heritage for future generations (e.g. archiving).

2.1.2 Cultural governance – Foundation Mons2015 and Mons2025

As the decision was taken in 2004 by the Mayor of Mons, Elio di Rupo, to initiate preparations for a bid for Mons to be ECoC 2015 he appointed the experienced cultural actor Yves Vasseur (at the time directeur general of Le manège Mons) as project leader. From January 2007 on, development of the bid was further supported by an informal working group chaired by Vasseur and including cultural representatives of the Ville de Mons as well as the Ministry of Culture of the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles.

First an informal group of cultural stakeholders led by Yves Vasseur and his deputy Marie Noble (formed in September 2007), some months later it got a legal base with the Foundation Mons2015 (February 2008). This foundation took forward the development of the application, including launching a website (www.mons2015.eu) in September 2008, operating an awareness-raising campaign and preparing the initial and full applications. In November 2014, just weeks before the great opening of the ECoC 2015, the budget was announced by Foundation Mons 2015 (FM 2015) and stated that 87% of funding came from the public sector and 13% from sponsorship and own revenue. Subsidies from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation amounted to 43% of revenue and those from the Walloon Region to 21%, the rest was supported by the European Funds.

In terms of overall expenses, FM 2015 announced that artistic projects represented 65% of the total budget, administrative costs 22% and communication/dissemination activities 13%. The largest artistic budgets were to be devoted to exhibitions (€ 8,883,039) and events as well as to artistic urban installations and contemporary music (€ 8,812,498). For comparison, most costs from the exhibition budget (€ 2,831,000) went to the "Lighthouse" and blockbuster project dedicated to Vincent Van.³⁸

After the ECoC year the FM 2015, whose primary mission was to implement the ECoC, was not entirely disbanded and became the Foundation Mons2025.³⁹ The new foundation retained some of the staff of the FM 2015 (although much fewer) and operates today still from the same premises and under the same governance structure.

³⁷ https://issuu.com/optnticbxl/docs/fr_mons_la_metamorphose

³⁸ <https://www.lalibre.be/regions/hainaut/2014/11/21/le-budget-total-de-mons-2015-est-de-705-millions-deuros-7KN5XEF2WNGMDPDRS2RWLE4YA/>

³⁹ https://www.rtf.be/culture/arts/detail_mons-capitale-europeenne-de-la-culture-en-2015-annonce-la-premiere-biennale-mons-2018?id=9397300

At the time of its launch it declared as its main goal to keep the momentum alive and *“to maintain the interest and the curiosity that (...) visitors and (...) public felt during this exceptional year”*. The need was expressed to continue opening the channels of culture, offering smart leisure activities, providing art historical knowledge for all Montois in a pedagogic but also fun way. This was also the intention in attracting international visitors and tourists.

Today, the Foundation Mons 2025 continues to operate in partnership with local businesses, in the context of “Club Mons 2025 Entreprises”, which serves as a successor to the Club Mons 2015 and complement the strategy and activities of the Foundation Mons 2025, including the staging of the Mons Biennale (as of 2018).⁴⁰

2.2 Policy features: policy strategies under analysis

2.2.1 Main features of the strategy

The idea for Mons to host the ECoC emerged from the wider strategy of the municipality to regenerate the city based on culture, tourism and new technologies. In this case, two political strategy papers from the municipality of Mons indicated early on in which direction the political support was moving.

In relation to the here analysed SWB (Quality of Life, Material Conditions and Societal cohesion) with respect to the citizens' of Mons and the wider Borinage area already in the municipal strategy of the period 2007-13 announced that:

*“(...the first) common priority is the development of the inhabitants of Mons through the economic, social and cultural recovery of the city. As such, the **well-being** and emancipation of citizens constitute an important goal.”⁴¹*

The strategy paper stated further that this objective *“can be met through initiatives promoting the creation of **new jobs**, through a bold **educational** and **cultural** policy and an appropriate **social** policy.”* To this end, the municipal authorities have promised to develop projects which will appeal to the **creativity of citizens** and which are sustainable. As such, the implementation of the local “future contract” during this legislature (2007-2013) was geared to allow for better **socioeconomic, cultural and educational** development of the City of Mons.

To maximise **societal cohesion** the strategy focussed on social action and solidarity. Collaborations between the City and the Public Social Action Center were to be strengthened in order to optimize actions in favour of **children**, the **elderly** and the most **vulnerable**. Furthermore, the city of Mons focussed on meeting the specific **needs of families**, helping mothers in difficulty, supporting single-parent families, supporting parenthood, preventing over-indebtedness.

Another focus was on **education**, namely the reinforcing of the Academy of Music and the intermunicipal association of the School of Architecture of Mons, which was to be continued in funding. Further measures included combating school drop-outs as well as violence prevention in schools, which was to be even reinforced. Most notably, regarding higher education, the city majority was in favour of supporting the development of a **strong university centre** in Mons. It was also in that spirit that, in particular, the political majority wanted to continue to renovate the cultural heritage of Mons and wider region

One of the primary policy objectives was to **increase the number of jobs** in Mons. While shifting the responsibility for measures to reduce unemployment on supra-local institutions, the municipality declared to be eager to actively participate in regional projects aimed at reducing unemployment and aimed to develop local initiatives to **stimulate new employment**. Finally, the strategy states also clearly that job creation also depends on the interest to encourage innovators and investors to come and develop their projects in the Grand-Mons.

⁴⁰ The Biennale turned out to be a Triennale, as first edition was in 2018, while the second is 2021. One of the flagship projects is the current “Fernando Botero. Au-delà des formes” exhibition in BAM. <https://www.mons.be/agenda/exposition-fernando-botero-au-dela-des-formes> DG EAC, Post -Ex , p. 69

⁴¹ <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/07-12.pdf>, p. 2-3

In accordance with the criteria identified in the “Agenda 21”, to which the political majority intended to subscribe, Mons intended to **step up initiatives in the social, economic and environmental fields**. For this purpose, it was seeking alternative financing such as developed by the Walloon region to promote the use of renewable energies.

It is noteworthy that local festivities organised in different “quartiers” (districts) of Ville de Mons were to be continuously supported. Each district of the city bears the features of its history, which is highlighted by the inhabitants during “ducasses” and local festivals. The political majority provided financial or logistical support for the sixty or so festivities organized around the city. These festivals were recognised for their value for **social cohesion** as they “*guarantee social ties in the neighborhoods and allow everyone to meet in moments of great conviviality*”. Moreover, work with non-governmental associations was to be stepped up, **both in the cultural field with the Participatory Cultural Council⁴² as well as transversally via the missions of the newly created Maison des Associations**. With the decision to implement the ECoC initiative in 2004, these cultural associations were set up and links with neighbouring cities such as Lille and Maubeuge established. Strong and regular cultural exchange happened at this level.⁴³ The cultural associations also played a very important role as regards the inclusion of local inhabitants. In the Maison folie, the public was for example invited to express itself through various activities, such as “Photo Workshops” or “Slam of Poetry” sessions. The main objective was to establish a link between the citizens of Mons and their culture.

Finally, in the strategy 2007-13 the political majority declared that it would seek external financing to continue renovating the cultural infrastructure (TCH) of the Ville de Mons. The following infrastructures were particularly concerned:

- facades and cultural infrastructures such as 106, rue de Nimy to locate the nerve center of Fondation Mons 2015
- In Grand-Mons – developing the infrastructure of the Spiennes mines.
- Strengthening tourism in locations such as the Hyon Waterfall
- Jemappes municipal park
- Van Gogh House
- Belfry - interior works and making the CH accessible to the public again.

Regarding the intangible heritage (ICH), the Doudou, the ritual Ducasse has just been awarded by Unesco the title of “Masterpiece of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity” in 2005. The majority parties intended to rigorously support and safekeep this centuries old tradition and its transmission as ICH among the youngest members in the city and region.

To this end and with the view of strengthening the local identity, the following projects were to be supported:

- the creation of an “Interpretation Centre dedicated to Saint George” at Mont-de-Piété;
- the establishment of a Maison du Doudou on the Grand-Place or in proximity to it;
- the creation of an educational kit for teachers and city children to learn about ICH

The second relevant strategy paper for ECoC Mons fell in the legislature period 2007-13. The formal decision of the European Commission to award ECoC was only to be communicated in some years’ time (at the latest in 2011).

In the framework of preparations for ECoC, initiatives associating with children, “actors of tomorrow” were to be carried out as well as close collaborations with local and regional cultural associations, universities, economic and media sectors. Ville de Mons was also looking into possible synergies with the wider

⁴² According to Yves Vasseur (interview 11/2021), the Participatory Cultural Council was an informal group of cultural stakeholders in the early days of planning for ECoC. It met regularly, including with citizens. As of 2007, linked to the founding of Mons 2015, the size and importance of this group grew in view of ECoC 2015.

⁴³ A very pertinent example is the Maison folie. See: <https://surmars.be/lieu/la-maison-folie/>

communities in the Province of Hainaut as well as with the towns and partner municipalities (French Community and the Walloon Region). As previously stated, the policy strategy 2007-13 and the measures put in place have resulted in some tangible improvements for the city of Mons. In the **new strategy from 2013-2018** the political majority reflected on the positive results achieved:

*“At the **socioeconomic** level, although retaining traces of the past, Mons has been recovering in recent years thanks in particular to the setting up of the Walloon Region’s Objective 1 program in the second half of the 1990s. This program has enabled the creation of numerous research centres, innovation and training, as well as **numerous investments in the field of culture and tourism.**”⁴⁴*

Large multinational companies have set up in Mons, providing hundreds of new jobs. The idea was that across sectors that business work with academia, with universities and SMEs that are experts in the field.

Thanks to EU funds as well as financial resources from the Walloon Region, the Ville de Mons was able to implement many other relevant infrastructural projects, such as the Congress Centre, design business centre; the restoration of the Church of Saint Nicolas; new tourist information office; the in-depth renovation of the train station district as well as an interpretation centre on military history (at the Water Machine). Significant benefits were created for local neighbourhoods, where, streets, sidewalks and facades were renovated.

Most of these infrastructure projects were completed in time for ECoC 2015. The City of Mons conceived the innovative Congress Centre as a new architectural landmark and a key element for its plan to revitalize the city economically.⁴⁵ However, another flagship project, i.e. the newly designed train station, as not completed on time. The Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava won the commission in 2006 only to see the start of the works delayed by a campaign to retain the existing station. The work on this prestigious project only began in 2013 and may finally cost twice as much as expected.⁴⁶

In order to strengthen further the attractiveness of the city center, the possibility of having Mons recognized as a tourist center by the federal government was central. The strategy of reinforcing the social cohesion remained an important objective throughout as expenses allocated for social cohesion (i.e. 33% of the total budget of the city and the CPAS (social services)). Thus, each year more than 71 million euros were devoted to childcare, the **well-being of senior citizens, people with reduced mobility, young people, as well as vulnerable groups**. Due to the lack of data, it is unclear to which extent these investments were also linked to cultural heritage considerations (e.g. inclusion of vulnerable groups through cultural activities; adaptation of cultural heritage place to people with reduced mobility).

Along with the digital industry, tourism had a very significant impact on the economic life of Mons as it greatly helped to maintain and create new jobs. In a decade, tourism has increased tenfold in the Greater Mons region: 270,000 tourists visited the city each year (excluding festivities of Doudou). The aim of the political strategy 2013-2018 was very ambitious i.e. to almost double the tourist visits and reach 500,000.

In view to ECoC Mons 2015, the local strategy aimed to support in **particular creators and promote local actors in all cultural fields**. This was part of the idea to connect, on the one hand, famous artists (Van Gogh, Rimbaud, Verlaine) with the city, and on the other hand, to encourage local creatives in participating in the activities and producing cultural content. It finally turned out that the most successful activities of ECoC 2015 in the eyes of the citizens of Mons were the events dedicated to local artists (i.e. Café Europa, Jardin suspendu etc.). By staging popular shows and performances and offering entertainment and exhibitions at small fees or even for free (e.g. free admission to museums on the first Sunday of the month), the organisers ensured that these events would be accessible to all and also widened the audience to groups beyond the usual circle. This objective was explicitly stated by the artistic leader of ECoC, Yves Vasseur:

⁴⁴ <https://www.mons.be/ma-commune/vie-politique/declaration-de-politique-generale/13-18.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://libeskind.com/work/centre-de-congres-a-mons/>

⁴⁶ See: <https://www.lecho.be/economie-politique/belgique/wallonie/la-nouvelle-gare-de-mons-couter-a-deux-fois-plus-cher-que-prevu/10239647.html>; see also: <https://www.architectural-review.com/places/mons-hubris-2015-european-capital-of-culture>

"We wanted all the events to be of the highest quality possible, but if we want to say is the program popular, yes, there is a whole series of events that will be free, major urban festivals, facilities that will be open to everyone and then the citizens took part ... the Grand Eight for example, there are eight weeks of celebrations in eight sectors of Mons, this idea built by and for the inhabitants mobilizes several thousand citizens ... We invited big names in Europe for Mons 2015, but in the specifications, it is stipulated that they must do part of their work with artists from here, so artists from here are not forgotten, citizens are not forgotten, it's a project for everyone."⁴⁷

The participation in the cultural events also aimed at increasing the sense of belonging and identity of local citizens. A project clearly dedicated to this objective was the newly created Military Museum, reflecting on the memories of the World Wars and the inhabitants of Mons. It was designed to be a space for reflection, investigation and interaction. Above all, it is supposed to be a venue where people from all generations are able to come and meet and interact.⁴⁸

Approaching the ECoC year, the ideas in the local municipal strategy had become more concrete, in terms that it announced that it would put in the spotlight on big popular names for upcoming ECoC exhibitions. This meant also relevant investments in blockbuster shows. At the same time, the strategy aimed to offer more spaces for expression, work and meetings for the citizens and grassroots organisations.

The municipality pledged to complete the works of many cultural infrastructures, among others the art library (former Ursuline convent), the St. George and the dragon - Interpretation Center on the Mont de Piété as well as the Interpretation Center of Military History at the Water Machine.

Most importantly, one crucial statement was made, that the municipality would ensure that the dynamics of Mons 2015 (i.e. legacy ensured and sustainability of achieved results) persist for the ECoC following years as well.

2.2.2 Main cultural infrastructure projects

The five big cultural infrastructures created in view of the ECoC Mons 2015 were an impressive contribution to the cultural offer of Mons. It was not only an important investment of public funds in its own right, but also in terms of their cultural importance for the citizens of Mons and region of Hainaut.⁴⁹ These five institutions were the new homes of the CH of the region and a hub for the CH safeguarding of cultural identity and interpretation of cultural heritage, contributing to a sense of European identity and increased visibility of the region on the EU cultural map.

- 1) The Artothèque⁵⁰, located in the chapel of the former 18th century Ursuline convent, is the main centre for archiving, researching, restoring and studying the heritage of Mons. It brought together some 50,000 pieces (which could not be permanently exhibited in other museums), mixing a wide range of CH spanning thousands of years, from prehistoric artefacts to contemporary art works.(€ 10.363.216 ERDF)
- 2) The Belfry⁵¹(Beffroi): recognized by Unesco "World Heritage of Humanity" in 1999 and only baroque belfry in Belgium. For ECoC the 17th century building was to be rediscovered after thirty years of construction works and renovation. An interpretation center was added allowing visitors insights into historical background and the meaning of the belfry for Mons through the ages. (Belfry park, € 851.080 ERDF, Belfry 7. 766.513 RW)
- 3) Mons Memorial Museum⁵²: reflects on the difficult aspects in the past of the city, ask some fundamental questions about the relationship between the civilian and military population. It

⁴⁷ https://www.rtb.be/info/regions/detail_voici-le-programme-de-mons-2015-exclusivite?id=8372262

⁴⁸ http://www.polemuseal.mons.be/en/mons-memorial-museum?set_language=en

⁴⁹ <http://www.wallonia.be/fr/actualites/mons-2015-5-nouveaux-musees>

⁵⁰ <https://www.artotheque.mons.be/>

⁵¹ <https://www.beffroi.mons.be/>

⁵² <http://www.monsmemorialmuseum.mons.be/>

presents multiple, complex realities of the phenomena of war as well as bringing closer the fates of the men and women who witnessed the horrible events. (€ 12.136.105 RW)

- 4) Musée du Doudou (The Doudou museum): dedicated to the traditional Ducasse festival, Saint George and the Dragon. La Ducasse comes from a European myth, that of Saint George and the dragon, which ultimately transcends great philosophical themes such as the structure of good and evil, secular and religious, nature and urban. It is particularly relevant for the inhabitants of Mons which keep the ICH alive, by participating in great numbers in the festivities (€ 4.084.235 ERDF)
- 5) SILEX'S: the archeological site of the neolithic mines of Spiennes is one of the oldest and largest centers of flint extraction in Europe (6 km from Mons). The excavations revealed thousands of objects including axes, flint blades, pottery but also the remains of faunal and human skeletons. SILEX'S includes various educational outdoor walks, a museum space with multimedia animations allowing a better understanding in human origins a valorising this site for locals and visitors alike. (SILEX'S Archaeological Museum , €3.106.185 ERDF)

2.2.3 Cultural programme of ECoC 2015

In order to put Mons on the European map as a symbol of economic and social re-imagining based on culture, it was understood that a successful alliance between the economic and cultural spheres was necessary. As a way of meeting the societal and economic challenges rooted in the economic downward spiral of the 20th century, the city of Mons built on the idea of culture and its rich CH to remodel and reinvent its image.

Recognizing the potential of the “new” digital economies of the early 2000’s the overall theme of the ECoC application was “*where technology meets culture*”. Therefore, two chosen main strategic axes for development: culture and new technologies.⁵³

The overall aim of ECoC Mons2015 was to be achieved through the pursuit of the following **objectives**⁵⁴:

- Provide “**harmonious**” **support for the economic development** of the town and the region
- **Refocussing of tourism (on CH)** in Mons and the cross-border area of Hainaut
- Create an example of **sustainable development**
- **Involve citizens** in a process of cultural democracy
- Reinforce Mons’s position in a **European city-networks**
- Develop **stronger communication** and co-operation in Europe (east-west), starting from Mons

In terms of **territorial focus**, the application foresaw four concentric circles with Mons at the centre including Mons/Borinage (200,000 inhabitants), Mons/Hainaut (1.3 million inhabitants) as well as partner towns from the French Speaking Wallonia Communities as well as Flemish speaking Communities (mostly within Flanders and Brussels regions) and the Northern départements within France. Finally, this circle focussed particularly on connections with former ECoC cities such as Lille (FR 2004), Luxembourg (LU 2007) and Essen (DE 2010).

Besides establishing impressive cultural infrastructures, which also served as sites for many of the events, ECoC Mons 2015 has featured a very large number of events. Cultural activities were distributed among four main themes: Images, Sounds, Words and Memory. They included activities in various domains: Festivities and gastronomy (36), Theatre and Dance (52), Festivals & Others (103), Fashion & design (18), Art in the city and trails (62), Exhibitions & museums (73), digital events (56), Literature (23) and Music (76).

⁵⁵

⁵³ LELOUP, Fabienne/ MOYART, Laurence; “Mons, capitale européenne de la culture en 2015 : deux modes de développement par la culture », Revue d’Economie, Régional et Urbaine, Mr. 5, 2014, p. 830

⁵⁴ DG EAC, p. 27

⁵⁵ Numbers provided in the study DG EAC, Ex-Post ECoC, p.141

An absolute programme highlight was the blockbuster exhibition on “Van Gogh in the Borinage”⁵⁶, with art works coming from various art museums across Europe (mainly NL). The concept of the exhibition was clearly to generate a wider, international appeal and the attraction of Van Gogh to the crowds was to ensure a high influx of national and international visitors. The choice of Van Gogh by Foundation Mons 2015 was not arbitrary, the idea was to connect the artist to the ECoC site as it was in the Borinage where Van Gogh decided to become an artist.

“(Early on) it was our idea to present the great personalities and artists from the region who are (still) present in the collective memory of the citizens (of Mons). We wanted to create a “fusion” between the (ECoC) project and the citizens. And the first name that came to our minds was that of Van Gogh.”⁵⁷

When this “Lighthouse” project was announced in 2011, the ECoC artistic leader Vasseur estimated the total number of visitors at 300,000 (exhibition duration 01-05.2015):

“Many visitors will come specially to see this Van Gogh exhibition and we hope that once in Mons, they will take the opportunity to visit the city and follow the other events. Lille, in 2004, had done the same by launching its year of European capital of culture with a large Rubens exhibition which drew a crowd.”⁵⁸

Already in March 2015 the museum BAM announced record visitor numbers since the opening in January, which have doubled from the previous month. The weekend visitors’ numbers have doubled and reached the maximum museum visiting capacity (2800 visitors).⁵⁹

A second major exhibition was dedicated to the renowned poet Paul Verlaine and his stay in Mons prison after a fight with his lover Rimbaud.⁶⁰ It included two years during which Verlaine wrote major poetic works during the trial, the imprisonment and the stay in Hainaut. Bernard Bousmanne, curator of the Verlaine exhibition, said: “Verlaine wrote some of his best, if not the best, poems while in (Mons) prison.”

Further cultural events generating high interest were exhibitions focussing on the myth of Saint George⁶¹. It reflected on the common aspects and deep cultural roots in European History and Culture, connecting the people across the European continent. It was for the first time, that the MAC (Musée d’art contemporain) exhibited old masters, however combined with contemporary works on this theme, commissioned from such renowned artists as Pennone, David Claerbout and Luc Tuymans.

Most impact on the local inhabitants had however smaller citizens generated projects (choosing their own theme and event location) such as the “Grand 8”. It was eight weeks of festivities by and for local inhabitants in the Greater Mons area). It was one of the biggest hits of ECoC Mons 2015, described as “a free, itinerant folk festival brimming with community warmth, family fun and culture of all stripes, from folklore to pop to fine art”.

The same profound engagement from citizens was sought and found with the “Grand Ouest”⁶² initiative, where not only Mons but also the Borinage and 12 municipalities of the West should bring, in their own ways,

⁵⁶ <https://www.visitmons.co.uk/see-do/top-sights/vincent-van-gogh/van-gogh-in-the-borinage-the-artist-s-emergence>

⁵⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1q5TTd2PhQ>

⁵⁸ <https://www.lalibre.be/culture/politique/2011/11/26/van-gogh-pousse-mons-2015-QSNPWBENVZBG5ITNH534NAFWKM/>

⁵⁹ Normally, the exhibition attracted some 1,400 visitors a day to view some 70 paintings, drawings and letters by Van Gogh. <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/hauts-de-france/2015/03/02/mons-2015-files-d-attente-impressionnantes-pour-les-toiles-de-van-gogh-666347.html>

<https://www.rtl.be/info/video/524481.aspx>

⁶⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/oct/18/paul-verlaine-new-exhibition-mons>

⁶¹ https://www.rtb.be/culture/arts/detail_mons-2015-l-homme-le-dragon-et-la-mort-coup-de-chapeau-a-laurent-busine?id=9113680

⁶² <https://www.lesoir.be/art/827702/article/mons-2015/2015-03-20/mons-2015-c-est-parti-pour-grand-ouest>

their contributions to ECoC Mons 2015. It lasted over 12 weekends and summarized an important part of the Mons 2015 cultural programming, i.e. decentralization to the municipalities of the wider Mons region. Relying on the active participation of the inhabitants and artists of the city and its surrounding region (including migrants living in the area), these events got the local population closer together. The main idea was to bring out everyone's hidden or unknown talents, *“paving the way for an intangible behavioural change legacy of local people's empowerment”*.⁶³

Other major events included *Café Europa*, a network of digitally connected modular and moveable places (e.g. containers) across Europe for revisiting the collective identity. Equipped with technology these places enabled people from different European cities and partners to connect. The overall objective was to create a convivial environment using new technologies, discuss together European issues and exchange cultural background information.

2.2.4 Financial inputs

In terms of inputs, the bid for ECoC Mons2015 received:

- **Crucial and strong political support** from the four main public authorities: Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, Région wallone as well as Province de Hainaut and foremost of the municipality of Ville de Mons. The ECoC application was also well supported by many of the municipalities and communes of the surrounding Borinage.
- **Strong artistic and CCS support** facilitated through the dedicated delivery agency Fondation Mons 2015 - a public utility foundation overseen by the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, the Région Wallonne, the Province de Hainaut and the Ville de Mons.
- **High public investments in infrastructure and cultural facilities** - The budget foreseen amounted to more than €143 million⁶⁴. Several of these facilities were used as venues for cultural events during 2015. Six of them opened or re-opened for the first time in 2015, namely: Arsonic, l'Artothèque, Beffroi de Mons, Mons Memorial Museum, Musée du Doudou and SILEX'S interpretive centre at the Neolithic flint mines of Spiennes.

⁶³ https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/files/ecoc-2015-second-monitoring_en.pdf

⁶⁴ DG EAC, Ex-Post, p.30

Table 2.1. Investments in cultural infrastructure (CH)

Investment project	€	Main funding sources
Headquarters of the Foundation Mons2015	4 470 730	FWB
Maison du Design	6 996 936	ERDF
Expositions de prestige	544 985	ERDF
Façades of centre-ville and Grand-Place	4 691 261	ERDF
Tourist and Cultural Information Office ("VisitMons")	4 342 824	ERDF
SILEX'S Archaeological Museum	3 106 185	ERDF
Musée du Doudou	4 084 235	ERDF
Saint Nicholas church	10 889 675	ERDF
Mons International Congress Xperience (MICX)	31 993 415	ERDF
Regeneration of the railway station quarter	8 080 493	ERDF
Artothèque	10 363 216	ERDF
Les Beaux-Arts Mons (BAM)	16 879 673	ERDF
Belfry park	851 080	ERDF
Collégiale Sainte-Waudru	801 569	ERDF
Arsonic	6 250 000	ERDF, FWB, SPW
Mundaneum	3 000 000	FWB
Maison Losseau	6 280 000	PH, FWB
Mons Memorial Museum	12 136 105	RW
Belfry	7 766 513	RW
Total	143,528,895	-

Key: ERDF: European Regional Development Fund; FWB: Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles; PH: Province de Hainaut; RW: Région wallonne.]

Source: DG EAC Ex_Post ECoC, p. 31

In addition to these allocations, the city of Mons submitted for its Capital of Culture application a budget of €78 million for the development phase and title-year (for the years 2011-15).

Table 2.2. Expenditure ECoC Mons 2015

Expenditure	Proposed expenditure 2006-15 (€)*	Expenditure in 2015 (€)**	Total expenditure 2006-15 (€)**	% of total expenditure (2006-15) (€)
Cultural Programme	54 333 298	40 227 730	43 587 403	62
Personnel	12 000 000	-	-	-
Previous operations	1 191 123	-	-	-
Marketing	10 000 000	8 043 403	8 978 588	13
Operating expenditure	-	15 275 160	15 677 501	22
Reserve	490 406	0	2 388 189	3
Total	78 014 827	63 546 296	70 631 681	100
Expenditure in-kind***	-	2 122 097	2 122 097	-
Total	78 014 827	65 668 393	72 753 778	

Sources: *Mons2015 final application; **Fondation Mons2015; ***NB: a breakdown of expenditure in-kind per year was not available, although most arose during the title-year.

Source: DG EAC Ex_Post ECoC, p. 49

Altogether, more than 221 million were mobilised in the cultural sector to implement the ECoC strategy. In absolute terms, the amounts invested in infrastructure work put Mons at the high end of the average for ECoCs (145 million euros).⁶⁵

⁶⁵ DG EAC Ex-Post ECoC, p. 49 ; KEA, p.8

2.3 Results of the analysed case: the contribution to societal well-being

2.3.1 Outputs

Overall, it can be said that ECoC Mons 2015 had a significant contribution in terms of societal well-being (SWB) on its citizens. The results achieved consisted of many tangible results, not only in terms of visible improvement of CH infrastructure, but also less visibly and more difficult to measure, in the creation and strengthening of social cohesion, providing stronger sense of local identity and more profound knowledge on common roots through tangible and intangible CH put in evidence through ECoC events.

While not being part of the ECoC 2015 Mons programme as such, the infrastructure projects mentioned above, the refurbishment of neighbourhoods, the construction of the congress centre etc, were supposed to revitalise the Mons region and contribute to the success of ECoC 2015. The outputs directly linked to the strategy ECoC Mons 2015 and its varied, multitargeted programme was focused on the overarching and widely spanned theme “*technology and culture*” underlining the different dimensions of transition which the city and region were undergoing.⁶⁶

The most relevant outputs financed within this programme were:

- “Home and away”: a space for “all possibilities”, a series of events celebrating the 10th anniversary of La Maison Folie⁶⁷. Born in the wake of Lille 2004, European Capital of Culture, Maison Folie took up residence in a former guardian and primary school. The idea was to create a multidisciplinary space, in perpetual metamorphosis, which evolves according to the projects, the artists and the public who frequent it.
- “Le Grand Huit” (“The Big Eight”), a series of eight weeks of festivities in eight territories in the Greater Mons region, each with its own theme
- “The Grand Ouest” (“The Big West”), allowed citizens and associations in the municipalities of the Greater Mons area to develop their own projects on the theme of territory, memory and identity and which took place during a week-long series of festivities;
- “Artistic Partners”, unique adventures produced by six prominent artistic figures;
- “Atmosphere places”, used a diversity of locations and buildings to host artistic events;
- “Mons2015 on tour”, involved events and collaborations with partner cities in Belgium and the north of France.
- MEDIA DJ, Mons Street ReView and the previously mentioned “Café Europa” as well as Jardin Suspendu
- Various pilot projects implemented to help with understanding of digital technologies, ease the approach and use of new technologies.

The ECoC programme was very rich and the sheer number of activities was truly impressive an all levels of cultural programme:

- **Exhibitions programme** - very ambitious and targeting not only local, regional or even only national visitors. The aim was to attract international audiences with renowned personalities, connected to local history, such as Van Gogh and Verlaine. These activities were co-ordinated by the Pôle muséal de la Ville de Mons⁶⁸ (museum cluster of the city of Mons) in partnership with the Foundation Mons 2015. Including the mentioned blockbuster shows, the exhibitions programme

⁶⁶ Programme Mons 2015, published 07.10.2014,
https://issuu.com/mons-2015/docs/mons2015_preprogramme_base_290914_v_e2ffe4e4a4606a
<https://www.lesoir.be/art/840139/article/mons-2015/2015-04-02/mons-ville-ou-il-pleut-des-musees>

⁶⁷ <https://surmars.be/lieu/la-maison-folie/>

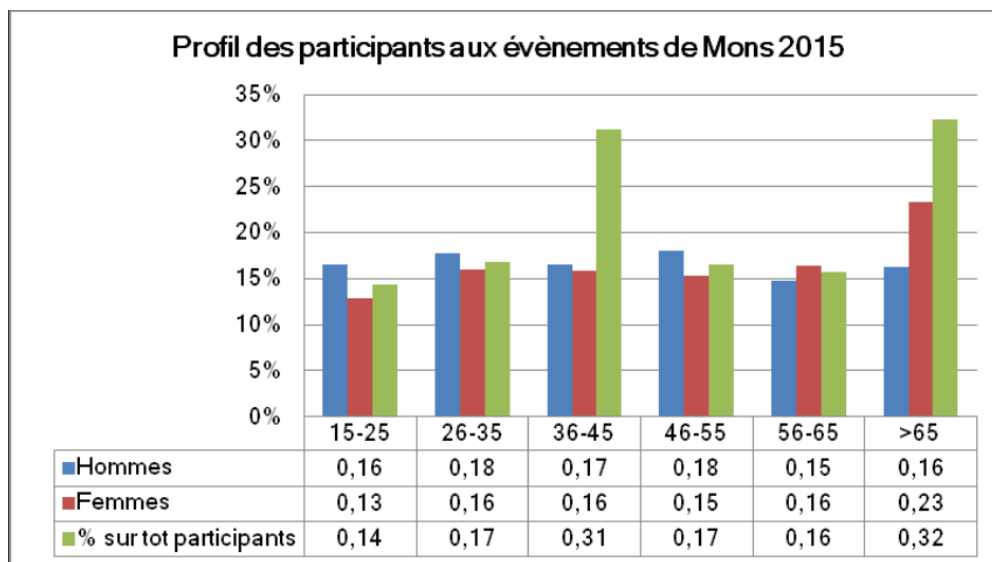
⁶⁸ <https://www.mons.be/que-faire-a-mons/culture/musees/musees-communiaux>

featured 20 exhibitions at nine different venues. The institutions were still running permanent exhibition programmes after ECoC 2015.

- **Performing arts programme** – included work with theatres and creating extraordinary events by taking theatre “out of its walls” and bringing it closer to the audiences outside, in the streets. During ECoC Mons 2015 a total of 33 performing art performances were staged.
- **Festivals** - with the objective to be particularly close to its citizens, impressive installations and events were staged in public spaces. It gained a lot of traction among visitors and locals alike and garnered interest from the national/international press. These were large, open-air events, including the opening ceremony and they took place at 22 different sites across the city of Mons. Along with that went also a **gastronomy programme** which featured activities focussed on the local cuisine of Mons and the surroundings.
- **Youth programme** entitled “Mon(s) idéal”⁶⁹ and aimed to involve young people as active participants in culture, not only as spectators.
- **Literature programme** showed the richness of literature linked to Mons to its citizens and to visitors.
- **Fashion and design programme** recognised the limited tradition and prominence of the fashion industry in Mons. It therefore sought to bring together the various operators in this field based in Mons and the Borinage to strengthen links between them and enhance their international visibility.
- **Music programme** - showcasing and reinterpreting the music and musical heritage of Mons and bring it to new audiences. The programme also drew the different towns and communes of Borinage into a structured programme of creation and performance.

Altogether, the Mons 2015 programme included 219 projects (of which 117 were interdisciplinary in nature) featuring 2,390 events of different sizes, cultural disciplines and art forms). The objective to widen target audiences, for example by attracting a relatively high share of young people in the cultural activities was achieved (around 14% of the participants were below 25 years).⁷⁰

Figure 2.1. Profile of participants ECoC Mons 2015



Source: KEA Survey Résidents Grand Mons, 2016. p. 56 <https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Mons2015-Rapport-IV-final-19072016-LD.pdf>

⁶⁹ <https://www.lalibre.be/culture/scenes/2015/01/20/mons-ideal-cest-aussi-wajdi-mouawad-TCd76RPQK5FBFNX7YBZXBPLTK4/>

⁷⁰ “Profil des participants aux événements de Mons 2015”, source: KEA, Enquête Résidents Grand Mons, 2016).

Overall, the strategy of the Foundation Mons2015 to implement the physical targets of ECoC Mons 2015 can be assessed as successful. A wide range of tangible results was achieved as specified in the next section.

2.3.2 Outcomes

It needs to be stressed that the cultural programme has facilitated the participation of the citizens of Mons as creators, performers and audiences of the ECoC cultural programme. This was not only the case during the ECoC year. It already started with the stronger involvement of cultural stakeholders and citizens as of 2004 leading to the title year as described before (Participatory Cultural Council, Maison des Associations, Foundation Mons etc).

ECoC Mons 2015 **transformed the city's image in the eyes of its inhabitants.**

- 80% of more than 700 citizens surveyed in a KEA study⁷¹ said they were **very proud of its attractiveness** as a cultural and tourist venue. They said that the ECoC event portrayed the city in a positive and dynamic light.
- 81% of respondents of the study stated that **ECoC Mons 2015 offered them a rich and diverse cultural programme.**

The KEA study (2016) confirms that a **very high level of participation by the local public** and among the residents of Greater Mons took place.⁷² For instance, of the 191,020 tickets purchased in Wallonia, 126,954 (66%) were purchased in Greater Mons.

A high number (90%) of respondents participated in at least one Mons 2015 cultural event. 77% of ECoC visitors surveyed, stated also that usually they do not visit cultural venues or events, which is a remarkable outcome in terms of attracting new audiences. Overall, with ECoC an increased interest in culture was found in 32% of respondents.

More importantly, **67% of respondents believed that Mons 2015 helped develop a greater sense of belonging and pride** among the people of Mons and **68% believed that it was beneficial to social inclusion.**

Research by KEA found that **86% of residents of Mons felt that the ECoC had been a positive event.** In the eyes of the citizens, the transformation of Mons was linked to ECoC 2015. This change was visible and tangible in the daily life of the citizens.

Nationally, ECoC Mons 2015 strengthened the cultural image of Mons and its **positioning as a city of culture.** The strategy has been effective in attracting international **tourists** from a wide range of EU and non-EU countries (by order of importance): France, Germany, Netherlands, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, England, Switzerland, United States, Italy, Spain, Canada, Austria, China as New Zealand, Thailand, Colombia as well as high number of national and regional visitors (Belgium, by region: 72% from Wallonia, 18% from Flanders, 10% Brussels).⁷³

The tourist office in Mons experienced a five-fold increase in tourist visits during 2015.

⁷¹ Two studies were commissioned: one by the city of Mons to analyze the economic impact of Mons 2015: at the Institute for Research and Human Development, University of Mons and the other by the Foundation Mons 2015 to KEA Consulting. See in particular KEA study (Enquête Résidents Grand Mons, 2016).

https://sharepoint1.umons.ac.be/FR/actualites/Documents/2014/Octobre/Element_10.pdf

⁷² Some scepticism was expressed on whether 'everybody benefited from Mons 2015': only 7% of respondents 'strongly agreed' and 16% 'moderately agreed'.

⁷³ Bilan de Mons 2015, 30.11.2015. p. 1

Among the figures mentioned by the UMons - university impact study (2016)⁷⁴ the following numbers are worth noting:

- 2,067,485 visitors⁷⁵ (including 1,952,348 day-trip visitors and 115,136 two-day visitors)
- Day visitors had an overall spending level of 106,425,064 euros.

Evidence from the KEA study suggests also that **82% of tourists were satisfied** with their visit to Mons during 2015.

A “conservative” estimate by DG EAC Post Ex-study suggests that the ECoC has attracted around € 75 million in additional expenditure by all tourists (whether visiting the tourist office or not) compared to the baseline situation.

In addition, the KEA study estimates that for each €1 invested by the public authorities in the operation budget of the Foundation, there was benefit to the Belgian economy of € 5.5. The UMons impact study found however that for **€1 invested in Mons 2015, the City benefited from 5.74 euros** (spread over a period of 10 years). However, it is unclear if this has resulted in a higher spending by the municipality in other policies connected to well-being or cultural heritage policies.

In terms of providing higher visibility nationally and internationally, data from the Foundation Mons 2015⁷⁶ confirms that there were visits from 450 accredited international journalists and 3,717 articles in the international press or items on international radio and television.

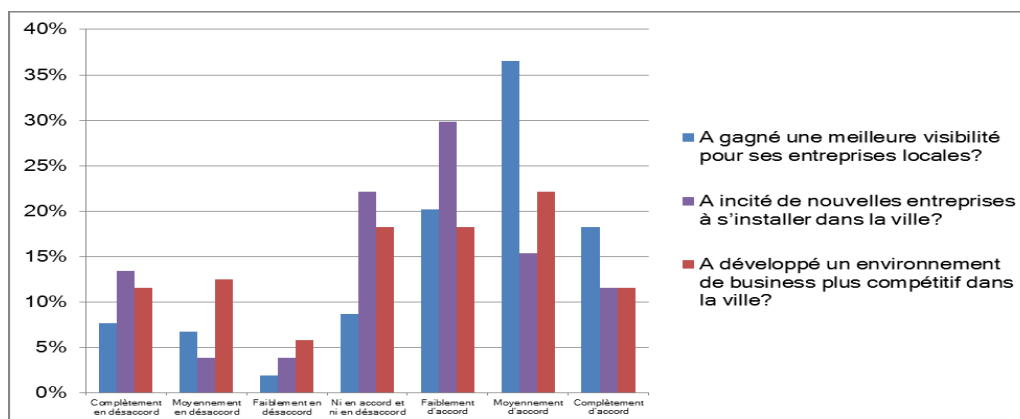
- Number of national press articles and TV radio topics: 8,420 (national penetration rate: 401,186,143 people)
- Number of international press articles and TV radio topics: 3,717
- Number of accredited journalists: 2330 accreditations including 450 international journalists
- Presence on social networks: more than 70,000 Mentions on Twitter, reaching more than 125 million users (Belgium and outside Belgium), more than 63,000 followers in total
- Number of visits to our website: 1.1 million (over 5 million page views)

As regards the local economy, there are tangible and intangible benefits from ECoC 2015. As regards intangible benefits, a KEA survey of the Mons 2015 Entreprises Club show that 68% of those surveyed were of the opinion that ECoC had positive economic consequences for the local economy linked to different factors such as increased visibility for local enterprises, new business settlements, and a more competitive business environment.

⁷⁴ https://www.rtf.be/culture/dossier/mons-2015/detail_mons-2015-un-effet-d-entrainement-de-5-6-a-6-3-euros-pour-chaque-euro-public-investi?id=9325045

⁷⁵ DG EAC, Post-Ex (2016)

⁷⁶ Bilan de Mons 2015, 30.11.2015, p.8

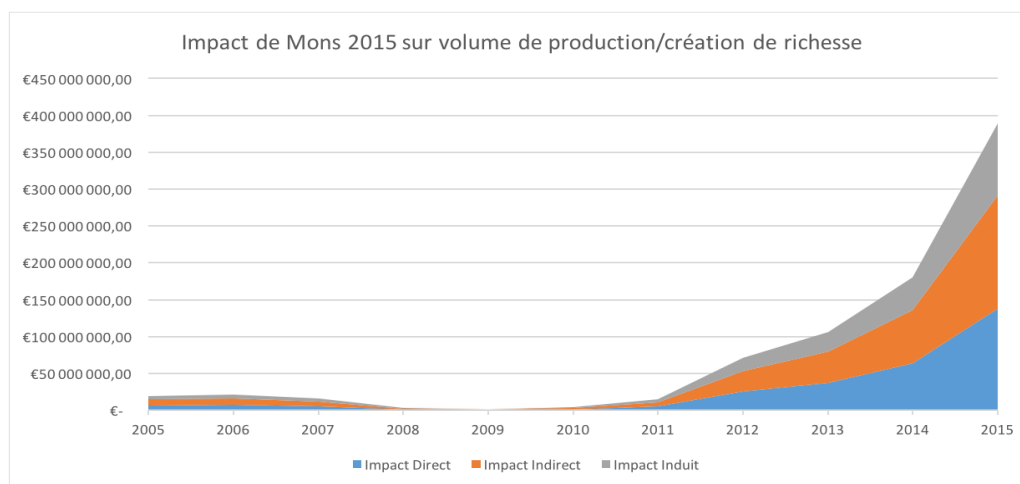
Figure 2.2. Survey “Club Mons 2015” Businesses (SME’s)

Source: <https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Mons2015-Rapport-IV-final-19072016-LD.pdf>, p. 63

In particular, the **improvement of culture and tourism infrastructure and services** resulted in an **increase in the number of visitors to the region** as a whole. Up to 2015, this has also resulted in an **increase in the number of jobs in the culture sector**.

ECoC 2015 provided some additional significant leverage effects such as improvement in activities related to tourism (e.g. retail trade, accommodation services, hospitality sector in general).

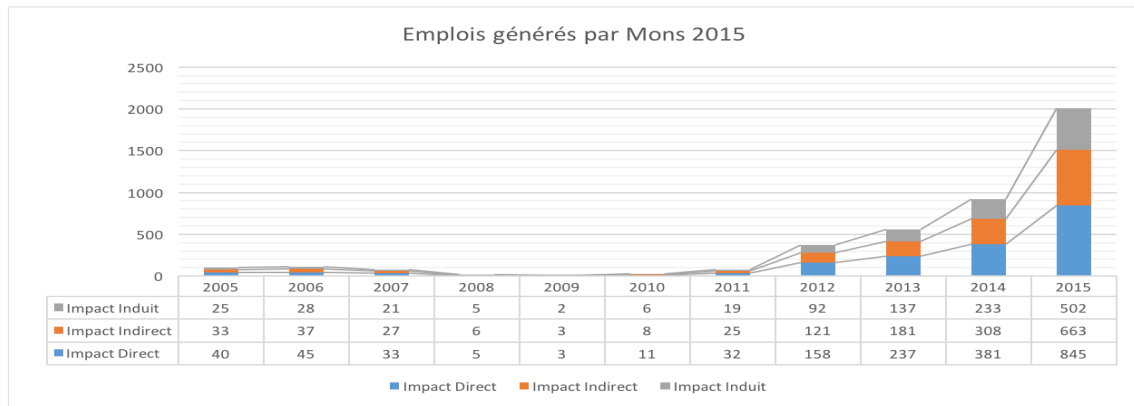
The average economic impact between 2005 and 2015 was estimated at 77 million euros per year, with a peak of more than 400 million euros in 2015. The variation of these impacts and their concentration in the post-2011 period was due to the acceleration of the preparation work for 2015, and the growth in infrastructure investment and artistic spending on the part of the Foundation in 2014-2015 and on the part of visitors in 2015.

Figure 2.3. Impact of Mons 2015 on wealth production/creation volume per year

Source: <https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Mons2015-Rapport-IV-final-19072016-LD.pdf>

Thanks to this increase in economic activity, Mons 2015 generated an average of 380 jobs per year (full time equivalent) from 2005 to 2015. Mons 2015 directly and indirectly created 800 jobs (equivalent persons per year) between 2011 and 2015 and around 50 in the previous period. In 2015, about 2,000 jobs were created by Mons 2015 (see: Jobs generated by Mons 2015 below; source: KEA).

Figure 2.4. Jobs generated by ECoC Mons 2015 on wealth production/creation volume per year



Source: <https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Mons2015-Rapport-IV-final-19072016-LD.pdf>

This in turn, resulted in improvement in the quality of life of the inhabitants, along with better access to cultural facilities and active participation in cultural/social city life. Alain Finet, professor at UMon and impact study leader stated in 2016:

*"For a budget of 71 million euros, the public contribution was 60 million. (...) The interest was to measure the impact on the economy of an investment of 60 million by the public authorities. But, beyond the figures and quantitative aspects, **there are qualitative consequences such as the image of brand, strengthening the feeling of citizenship, etc.** A whole series of elements that are difficult to quantify except in a medium or long term perspective."*⁷⁷

In general, it can be said that the sum of all interventions leading up to ECoC and then the title year itself, with the leverage of CH of Mons and in synergies with CCS, has helped the creation of a stronger regional identity around the historical and cultural heritage of Mons and the region.

2.3.3 Mechanisms favouring/hampering the success of ECoC Mons 2015

The elements ensuring the success of Mons ECoC bid were the following:

- **Embedding the ECoC in a wider strategy for development.** In the case of Mons, the idea of the ECoC was explicitly embedded in the city's development strategy from a very early stage, i.e. more than 10-12 years before the title-year
- The operation of the **governance and management arrangements** of Mons2015 has been relatively smooth and stable, despite the complexity of the Belgian governance context. One key factor was the strong, high-level political support offered by the mayor at the time of the decision to apply, Elio di Rupo.
- The political commitment underlining the importance of culture was complemented by the **strong cultural leadership** of the ECoC director, Yves Vasseur and his team. His previous experience as cultural director of La Manège and his connections to the cultural director of Lille ECoC 2004 were beneficial in preparing ECoC Mons successfully.
- Unusual amongst ECoCs **having continuity within the key members of the operational team** throughout the process. Moreover, that team was very much rooted locally, although with the necessary international experience and connections required to deliver an effective ECoC.
- **Strong inclusion of the local level** in the preparation and implementation of ECoC2015. This was achieved by delivering cultural programmes in improved neighbourhoods. Local venues were for example used for neighbourhood projects such as the "Jardin suspendu" favouring citizens'

⁷⁷ https://www.rtb.be/culture/dossier/mons-2015/detail_mons-2015-un-effet-d-entrainement-de-5-6-a-6-3-euros-pour-chaque-euro-public-investi?id=9325045

participation. In addition, active outreach activities over many years with open calls, talking to the citizens committees in the region, and involving them directly in decision making was crucial to attract a wide audience of participants.

- **Sustainability plan which helped that some of the ECoC activities could be sustained**, however not at the same scale or level of intensity as in 2015. In time, the municipality of Mons has put in place very concrete plans for continuation activity. At the heart of these plans is a proposed biennial, the first edition staged in 2018.
- **Creation of the legacy - Fondation Mons 2025** - with some of the staff of the Fondation Mons 2015 (although much fewer). It continues to operate from the same premises and under the same governance structure. Some of the funds from ECoC 2015 were saved and have been used for a comfortable start post-ECoC in 2016.

However, there are some questions arising, as with all ECoC's, if the above-mentioned positive outcomes and related investments are financially sustainable in the long-run. Risks are in particular linked to the sustainability of the CH investment projects many of which were being large-scale infrastructure investments (e.g. five big museums) and will be dependent on public funding for operation and maintenance in the long run.

In case of Mons, it is further unclear whether the local/regional government is willing and able to sustain these investments in the future.

In 2018 the municipal administration of Mons with its new mayor Nicholas Martin declared in its general policy statement a shift in policy priorities after ECoC. Having had a pivotal role in the mayor Di Rupo era, culture was supposed to play a more modest role in the future. "*Culture is not the alpha and omega of politics in Mons,*" announced the new mayor in the town council, indicating a stronger emphasis on economic activities linked in particular to digital and communication technologies. He clarified his stance as follows:

*"Culture can be used as a leverage, but there are others (...) At a time of globalization and while the Walloon Region is drawing the strategic contours of the 2050 horizon, we must aim to develop our city as a metropolis by relying on the Mons-Borinage agglomeration which represents 250,000 inhabitants. We have to think about cultural development, but also about economic and social development. (...), we are carrying out important work to build on the poles of excellence that we have such as digital technology, new materials and communication technologies."*⁷⁸

In addition, safety, social inclusion and urban transport considerations moved to the forefront of his policy agenda: "*We do not disinvest in culture*", added Martin. "*But the municipality also wants to respond to a whole series of daily concerns of the population such as safety, housing, childcare, cleanliness and mobility.*"

The role of **culture was relegated to supporting tourism** development which aimed at placing Mons at the head of Wallonia in terms of growth in this area. This decision was motivated by the number of tourists which in 2017 had broken a record with 190,000 hotel night stays in Mons. Overall, in line with the new policy priority of attracting more tourists to the city and region, cultural investments were reduced in terms of size and focused on punctually strengthening the museum pole (e.g. renovation works in the Duesberg museum, est. € 700.000 – 900.000)⁷⁹.

While the policy statement of the municipal administration also referred to using culture for strengthening social cohesion by "*working more with associations and local artists in order to strengthen the presence of art in the city for all those who do not have the chance to go to theatres*", in reality the aspect of citizens inclusion and grassroots initiatives has suffered the most in the post-ECoC period. Only few initiatives survived, such as the Jardin suspendu⁸⁰ thanks to mainly personal involvement and support of residents. Smart and inclusive projects, such as Café Europa⁸¹ have not found continuation after ECoC 2015.

⁷⁸ <https://www.dhnet.be/regions/mons/avec-nicolas-martin-a-la-tete-de-mons-la-culture-n-occupera-plus-la-meme-place-5c1a7d9fcd70e3d2f756aa95>

⁷⁹ <https://laprovince.sudinfo.be/315338/article/2018-12-02/mons-700000-900000eu-pour-le-musee-duesberg>

⁸⁰ <https://www.lejardinsuspendu.be/>

⁸¹ <http://www.wallonia.be/fr/actualites/mons-2015-quand-le-numerique-rencontre-la-culture>

3 Conclusions and lessons learnt

According to several ex-post evaluations (DG EAC, KEA and University Mons), the European Capital of Culture Mons 2015 has proven to be a success. This success relied on a wide range of factors, some of which had their origin already some 15 years before the ECoC year.

Already in the early 2000's the local and regional Walloon policy makers identified an **urgent need for change**, which was linked to the dire economic situation of Mons and Borinage (stemming from the industrial past and the 20th century heavy industry decline). The decline manifested itself in grave social inequalities and very low employment rates (compare to Belgium and EU average).

A **comprehensive political strategy for economic and social regeneration** of the city of Mons and its surrounding region was therefore adopted by the political establishment. It was built around two main axes with significant potential to revive the economy: culture and digital innovation. These two axes were seen as important leverage points in creating a new image of Mons as a creative and digital hub, offering attractive CH (UNESCO) sites for tourists and residents as well as attracting important new investments into the region (Digital Innovation Valley), thus, generating jobs and growth.

The strategy of the Ville de Mons and the **long-term vision** of its then mayor di Rupo (PS) garnered **strong political support** from all levels of government, especially once a clear target – Belgian 2015 ECoC bid - was announced in 2004. This created a clear and stable perspective of support over a 10-year horizon to prepare and implement the necessary investments in regenerating the city and its surrounding regions with a view to **increasing the societal wellbeing (SWB) of its citizens**.

Besides the long-term vision and support, another crucial success factor was provided by putting in place a solid **cultural governance and management structure** early on. With Yves Vasseur, the ECoC bid had as of 2004 an experienced culture manager in a key role to implement the cultural programme of Mons (having learned and benefitted from other ECoC examples, e.g. Lille 2004). He was supported by a strong CH team and the newly founded cultural executive agency Foundation Mons 2015.

Early planning and decision-making was also crucial to secure the necessary funding to implement the ambitious goals. Important financial support was provided by the local and regional administrations as well as continuous contributions from the EU funds (primarily ERDF programmes 2007-13 and 2014-2020 for the Hainaut region).

Working towards the ECoC year, a **clear focus** was put on a significant number of **infrastructure projects** related for example to restoration of CH monuments (e.g. Musée de Doudou, Beffroi), which were **successfully and timely implemented**. Important city infrastructures for citizens and tourists were also improved and service facilities (e.g. tourist offices) upgraded. New partnerships between the municipality and the corporate sector were concluded.

The ECoC cultural events were based on **two overarching ideas: to attract wider audiences (national and foreign) and root them into local history**. This was successfully achieved by organising blockbuster exhibitions linked to Van Gogh in Borinage and Verlaine. While these events with internationally recognizable names had wide appeal for tourists and the press, locals preferred the range of smaller initiatives such as Café Europa or Jardin suspendu (city of Mons), Grand 8 and Grand Ouest (Grand Mons region). These emerged from cultural stakeholder meetings with local neighbourhood committees which jointly organised these events, assuring direct citizens participation and ownership. According to Yves Vasseur (2021), locals preferred these small events since they allowed for their own participation and input, the strong link to their neighbourhood and the relatively low costs of these events. Bigger events and exhibitions were more considered for tourists.

This led to a high **number of residents participating** in cultural activities triggering a strong **sense of identification** with their home town and region.

Studies, surveys and a limited number of statistics suggest that the ECoC had a **positive impact on the economic and social situation of Mons** and its surrounding region and the **wellbeing of its citizens**.

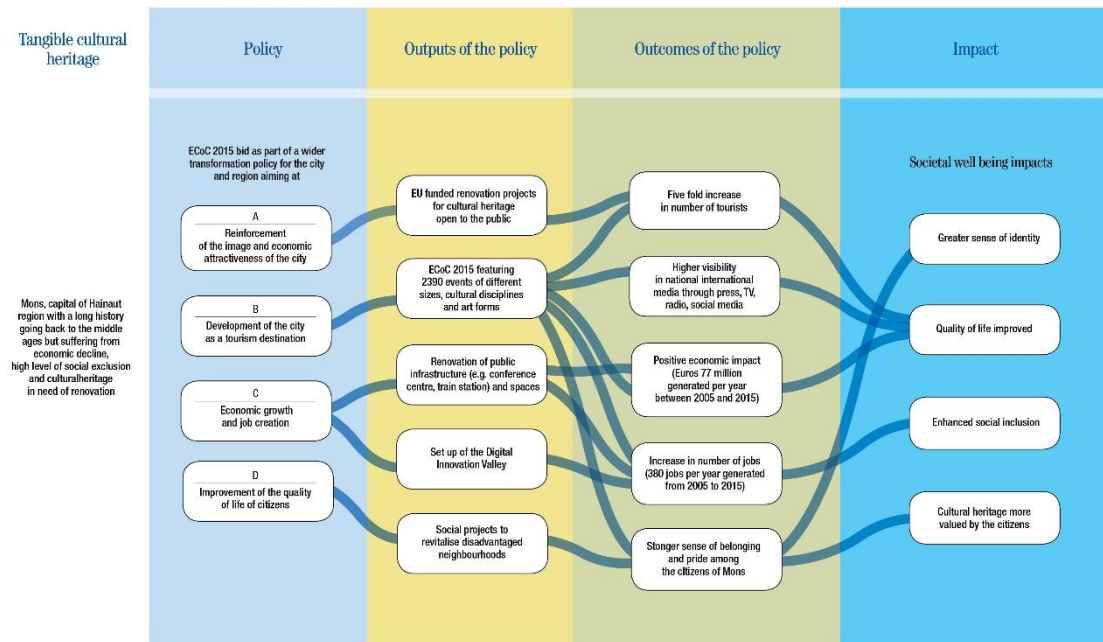
However, it is unclear whether these benefits will be long lasting. While the city of Mons has assured the continuation of some cultural activities and put in place the legacy agency Foundation Mons 2025, policy priorities have shifted and the budget for supporting the cultural sector has greatly diminished after the ECoC

year. Relying on increased number of tourists may not be sufficient to finance and maintain all new CH venues.

It also needs to be underlined that many of the important long-term impacts of ECoC are intangible which cannot be easily measured. The intangible factors include a better image, increased national/international profile, greater local pride and well-being of inhabitants as well as a greater vibrancy of the cultural and creative sectors bringing benefits to the local economy.

The figure below sums up the main outcomes of ECoC Mons 2015.

Figure 3.1 ECoC Mons 2015 Theory of Change



Source: author's own elaboration

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ANNEXES

Interviewees/participants in focus groups

Name of interviewee: Yves Vasseur

Position of interviewee: ECoC Mons 2015 artistic director (commissaire Mons 2015)

Name of the organisation: Fondation Mons 2015

Type of organisation: Executive cultural agency of ECoC (until ECoC 2015 and then taken over by Fondation Mons 2025)

Country and region: Belgium, Wallonia

Address: Mons, Archives Fondation Mons 2015

Contact telephone: n/a

Email address: n/a

Date of interview: Thursday, 25/11/2021

Time of interview: 9-11 a.m.

Interviewer: Nancy von Breska Ficovic

Name of interviewee: Manuela Valentino

Position of interviewee: Mons, Pole museal, curator UNESCO cultural heritage

Name of the organisation: Arthotheque

Type of organisation: Cultural heritage organisation

Country and region: Belgium, Wallonia

Address: Rue Claude de Bettignies, 1 - 7000 Mons

Contact telephone: 0032 65 40.53.25

Email address: polemuseal@ville.mons.be

Date of interview: Tuesday, 12/10/2021

Time of interview: 9.00-10.00

Interviewer: Nancy von Breska Ficovic

Name of interviewee: Philippe Kern

Position of interviewee: Director KEA

ECoC Mons 2015 – author study, Assessment of the impact of Mons 2015

Name of the organisation: KEA European Affairs, Brussels

Type of organisation: Cultural Consultancy

Country and region: Belgium, Wallonia

Address: 51, rue du Trône 1050 Brussels Belgium

Contact telephone: 0032 2 289 26 00

Email address: info@keanet.eu

Date of interview: Thursday, 7/10/2021

Time of interview: 11.30-12.30

Interviewer: Nancy von Breska Ficovic

Participants in the workshop January 12th, 2022:

KEA Brussels, Pole Museal Mons (Xavier Roland), Sylvian Pasque (DG EAC), Flavia Pesce, Cristina Vasilescu, Christine Hudson (Umea University), Petya Koleva (Intercultura), Fredrick Lindgren (Umea, Head of Culture ECoC), Victor Yankov (Plovdiv ECoC 2019), Rosella Tarantino (Matera ECoC), Kalliopi Chainoglu (Zyprus university), Pierluigi Sacco (UILM University Milan) and Jordi Pardo (Nartex Barcelona)

Tables

Table I – ERDF and ESF funding in Belgium compared to Hainaut (Ville de Mons) – 2014-2020

CNTR_CODE	NUTS_ID	NAME_LATN	ERDF		ESF	
			Number of projects (2014-2020)	Total Allocations (2014-2020 in Euro)	Number of projects (2014-2020)	Total Allocations (2014-2020 in Euro)
BE	BE	BELGIQUE-BELGIË				
BE	BE1	REGION DE BRUXELLES-CAPITALE/BRUSSELS HOOFDSTEDELIJK GEWEST	4	16.607.727,00		
BE	BE2	VLAAMS GEWEST				
BE	BE21	Prov. Antwerpen			2	329.179,00
BE	BE22	Prov. Limburg (BE)			1	99.502,51
BE	BE23	Prov. Oost-Vlaanderen			4	2.861.179,01
BE	BE24	Prov. Vlaams-Brabant				
BE	BE25	Prov. West-Vlaanderen				
BE	BE3	REGION WALLONNE				
BE	BE31	Prov. Brabant Wallon				
BE	BE32	Prov. Hainaut *	12	46.862.243,38	1	1.555.000,00
BE	BE33	Prov. Liege	1	1.500.000,00	1	597.464,80
BE	BE34	Prov. Luxembourg (BE)				
BE	BE35	Prov. Namur				
		* a high number of projects linked to Mons 2020, ville creative, culturelle et intelligente				
		INTEREG				
	Name of Interreg programme (2014-2020)		Number of projects (2014-2020)	Total Allocations (2014-2020 in Euro)		
	1. Interreg V-A - Belgium-Germany-The Netherlands (Euregio Maas-Rijn)		1	4.607.364,46		
	2. Interreg V-A - France-Belgium-The Netherlands-United Kingdom (Two seas)		0	0		
	3. Interreg V-A - Belgium-France (France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen)		8	10.170.111,47		
	4. Interreg V-A - France-Belgium-Germany-Luxembourg (Grande Région)		3	19.172.328,75		
	5. Interreg V-A - Belgium-The Netherlands		6	19.742.530,47		

Table II – List of projects funded by ERDF and ESF (2014-2020) linked to Mons2015

Rénovation en vue d'accroître l'efficacité énergétique des infrastructures publiques, projets de démonstration et actions de soutien	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Hôtel de Ville (Mons); vers une meilleure efficacité énergétique	Restauration de l'hôtel de ville, de la Chapelle Saint Christophe et de la Chapelle St Georges à Mons dans une optique de meilleure efficacité énergétique.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	5.939.415,89	40,00	7000	BE
Rénovation en vue d'accroître l'efficacité énergétique des infrastructures publiques, projets de démonstration et actions de soutien	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Plan Lumière	Mise en place d'éclairages intensifs, festifs et fonctionnels et mise en lumière du patrimoine sur les sites du Beffroi et de la Grand'Place et en centre-ville à Mons.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	2.437.027,37	40,00	7000	BE
Mesures environnementales visant à réduire et/ou à éviter les émissions de gaz à effet de serre (y compris le traitement et le stockage du méthane et le compostage)	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Centre logistique urbain	Centre logistique urbain	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	3.364.625,00	40,00	7000	BE
Autre réfection ou amélioration du réseau routier (autoroute, route nationale, régionale ou locale)	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - La Place Nervienne	Création d'un parking souterrain sous la place Nervienne à Mons.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	3.175.000,00	40,00	7000	BE
Autre réfection ou amélioration du réseau routier (autoroute, route nationale, régionale ou locale)	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Les voiries	Réfection des voies de circulation, des trottoirs, égouttage, mise en lumière et équipement de voiries au niveau de l'axe de la gare et l'entrée du piétonnier et du cœur commerçant de la ville à Mons.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	7.742.847,57	40,00	7000	BE
Autre réfection ou amélioration du réseau routier (autoroute, route nationale, régionale ou locale)	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Quartier Gare-Congrés	Rénovation de la place Léopold, de voiries et passerelles, aménagement de la place des Congrès et création d'un parc urbain dans le périmètre de la gare de Mons.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	19.724.390,53	40,00	7000	BE
Services d'appui avancé aux PME et groupes de PME (y compris services de gestion, de commercialisation et de conception)	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	DigiSTORM - " les nouveaux territoires numériques, les industries culturelles et créatives" - Centre de la créativité - Quartier général de "Creative Valley" (Ville de Mons)	Création et animation du hub créatif du Coeur du Hainaut à Mons, permettant notamment d'expérimenter et de valider les projets développés au sein du living lab montois et de connecter le hub à l'écosystème "industries créatives et culturelles".	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	571.843,48	40,00	7000	BE
Services d'appui avancé aux PME et groupes de PME (y compris services de gestion, de commercialisation et de conception)	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	DigiSTORM - " les nouveaux territoires numériques, les industries culturelles et créatives" - Smart Heritage (living museum lab)	Création et animation d'un living museum lab à Mons, espace d'échanges sur la thématique du "musée 2.0" et d'expérimentation en contexte public de nouvelles pratiques muséales liées à la révolution du numérique.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	1.134.000,00	40,00	7000	BE
Infrastructures commerciales des PME (y compris les parcs et sites industriels)	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Maternité commerciale	Création d'une maternité commerciale à Mons en vue d'y accueillir de nouveaux commerçants.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	9.651.199,07	40,00	7000	BE
Protection, développement et promotion des actifs touristiques publics	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Expositions "nouvelle génération" et mapping	Expositions "nouvelle génération" et spectacles de vidéo-mapping au BAM et au centre historique à Mons.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	1.180.000,00	40,00	7000	BE
Protection, développement et promotion des actifs touristiques publics	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Maison espagnole - Maison des Patrimoines UNESCO	Réaménagement intérieur de la Maison Espagnole en maison des patrimoines Unesco à Mons.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	380.000,00	40,00	7000	BE
Protection, développement et promotion des actifs touristiques publics	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Maison Jean Lescarts	Restauration extérieure et aménagement intérieur de la Maison Jean Lescart à Mons en un site muséal.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	2.947.570,70	40,00	7000	BE
Protection, développement et promotion des actifs touristiques publics	FEDER/ERDF	Wallonie-2020 EU – La Stratégie wallonne pour une croissance intelligente durable et inclusive en partenariat avec l'Union Européenne (2014BE16RFOP003)	Ville de Mons	Mons 2020, ville créative, culturelle et intelligente - Square Saint-Germain	Création d'un nouvel aménagement paysager contemporain du square Saint Germain à Mons.	15.05.2014	31.12.2023	907.688,00	40,00	7000	BE

Source: ERDF, 2014-2020 <https://www.europeinbelgium.be/en/wallonia-erdf>



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