

# Zugdidi Cultural Development **STRATEGY**

2022-2026

Creative Zugdidi for a Better Future

# ZUGDIDI

## CREATIVE CITY OF ARTS, CRAFTS AND GASTRONOMY



### Creative Zugdidi for a Better Future

#### People and Place Centred Cultural Strategy

#### Reimagining culture and creativity for local development

Zugdidi Cultural Development Strategy was elaborated within the framework of **EU4Culture** project. The project is financed by the European Union and is implemented in Georgia by the Goethe Institute and its partner organizations. Contents of this strategy and materials presented are the sole responsibility of Zugdidi Municipality City Hall and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

# Zugdidi CDS has been adopted by Sakrebulo of Zugdidi Municipality on May 20, 2022

GEORGIA

Sakrebulo of Zugdidi Municipality, N45 Zv.Gamsakhurdia street, Zugdidi,2100

C. Zugdidi

20.05.2022

Sakrebulo of Zugdidi Municipality

Order N 56

On approval of Zugdidi Culture Development Strategy and Action Plan

Based on Organic Law of Georgia, Local self-government code Article 19, paragraph „ B”, 54 Article , first paragraph „ E”. „G” subparagraph, in accordance with Zugdidi Municipality Letters N 24-242213672 and N 24-22139216 of May 16, 2022 , Sakrebulo of Zugdidi Municipality ordered the following:

- 1.To be approved the appendix:
  - 1.1 . Zugdidi Culture Development Strategy (2022-2026), appendix N 1;
  - 1.2 . Zugdidi Culture Development Strategy and Action Plan, appendix N2
- 2.The Order to be sent to Zugdidi Municipality City Hall
- 3.The Oder shall enter into force upon the date of its signing
- 4.The order can be appealed in Zugdidi District Court within one month from the date of its introduction. (address: N 12 R.Laghidze street, C. Zugdidi)

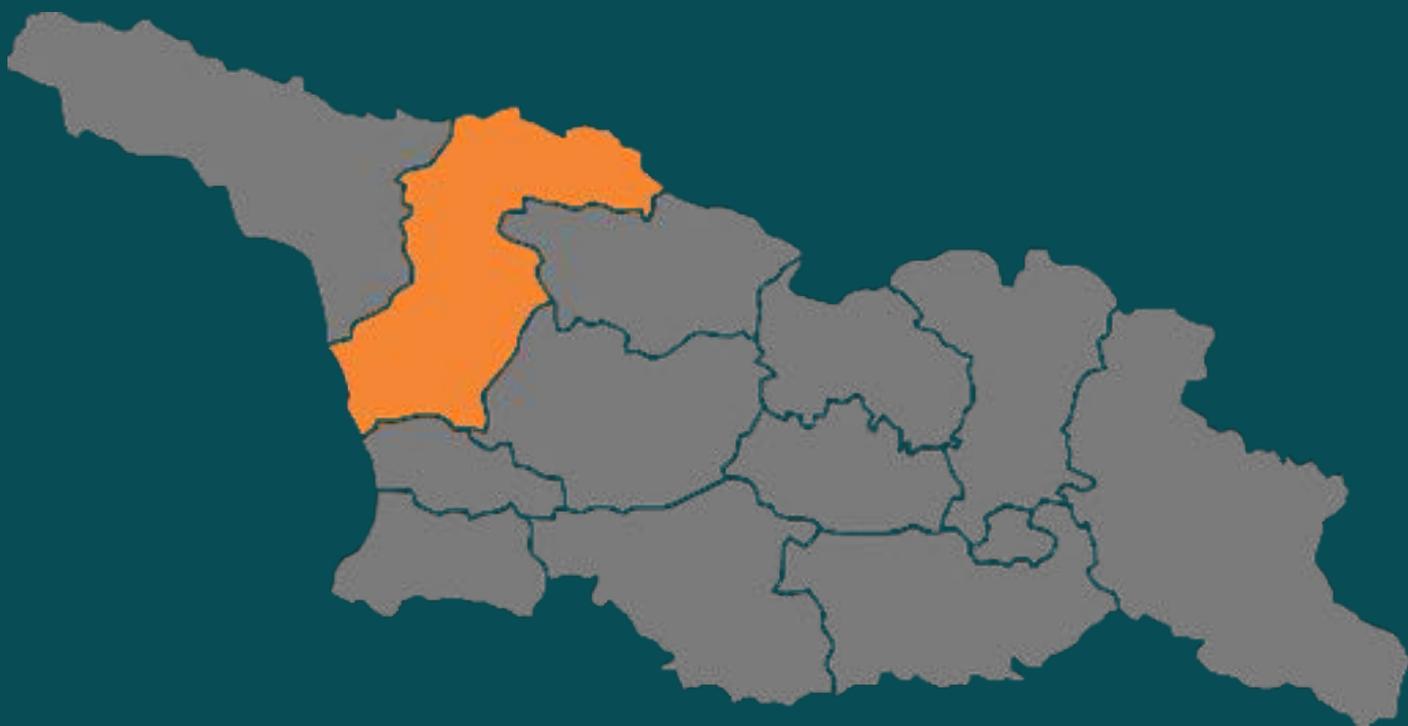
Head of Sakrebulo: Giga Parulava/ Signed/ Sealed

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that this document is a true and accurate translation of the original document from Georgian to English, to the best of my ability and knowledge.

Elza Jigaris



## Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region

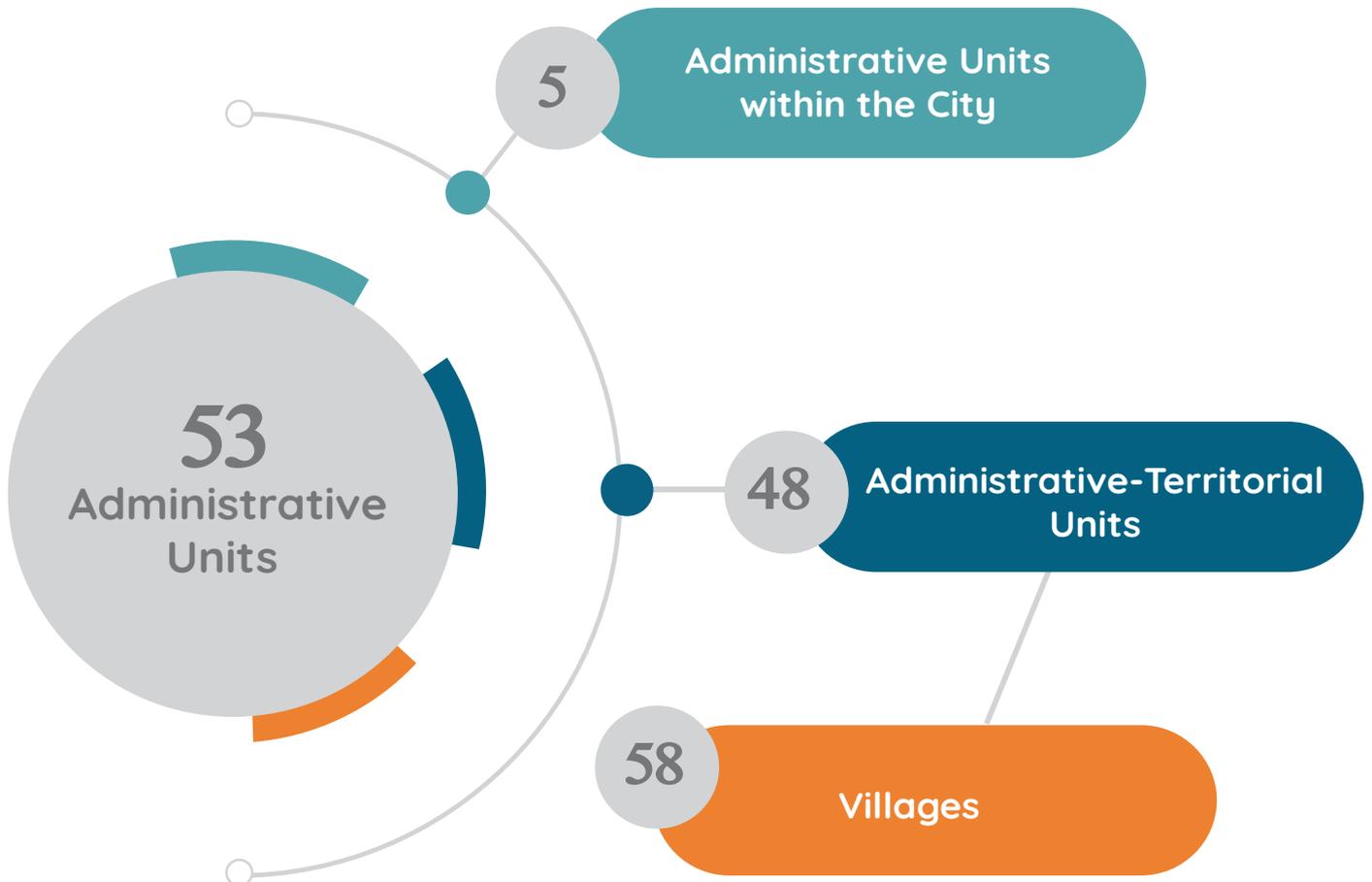


## Zugdidi Municipality

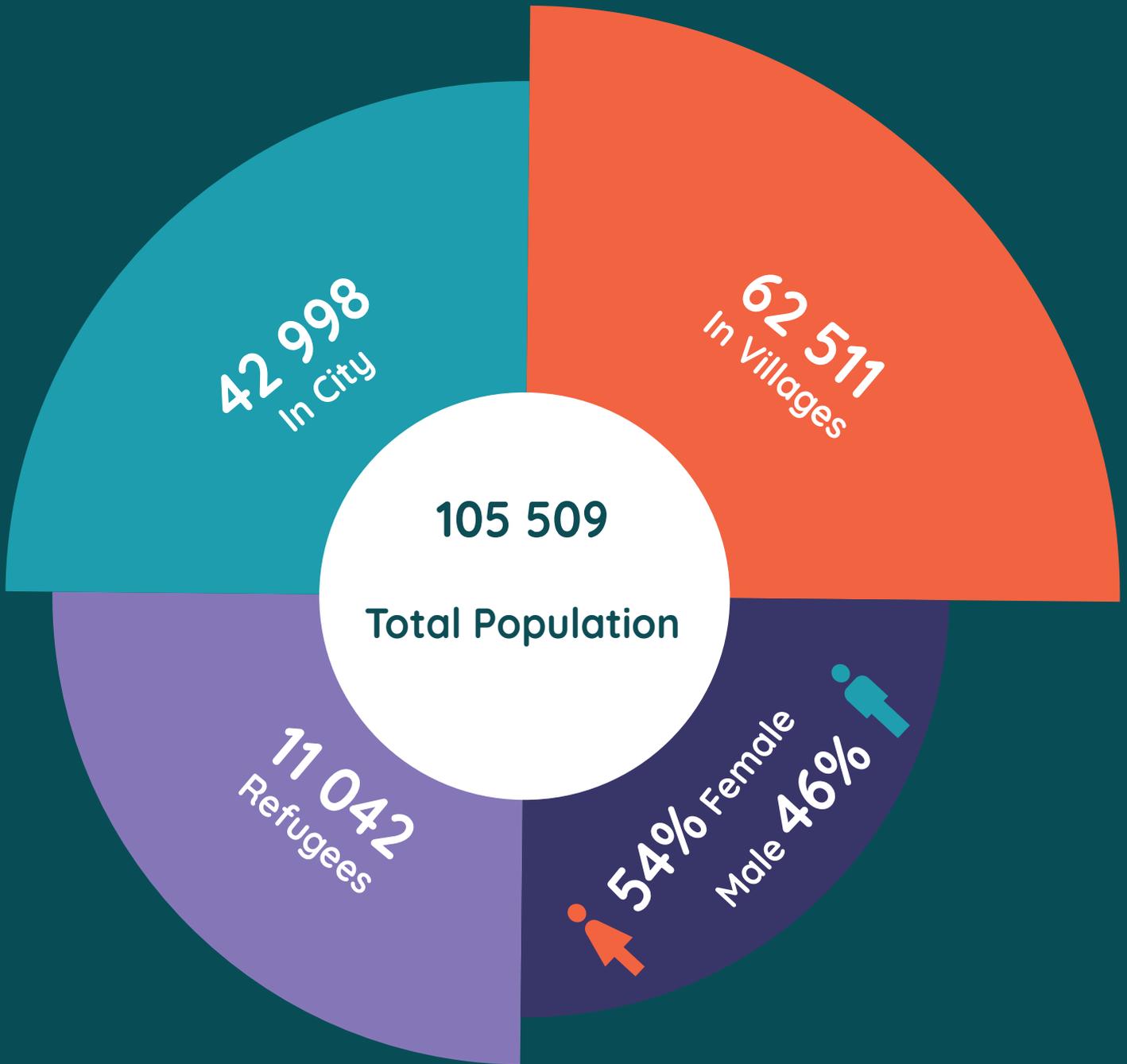
Area - 692 m<sup>2</sup>



# Administrative Units in Zugdidi Municipality

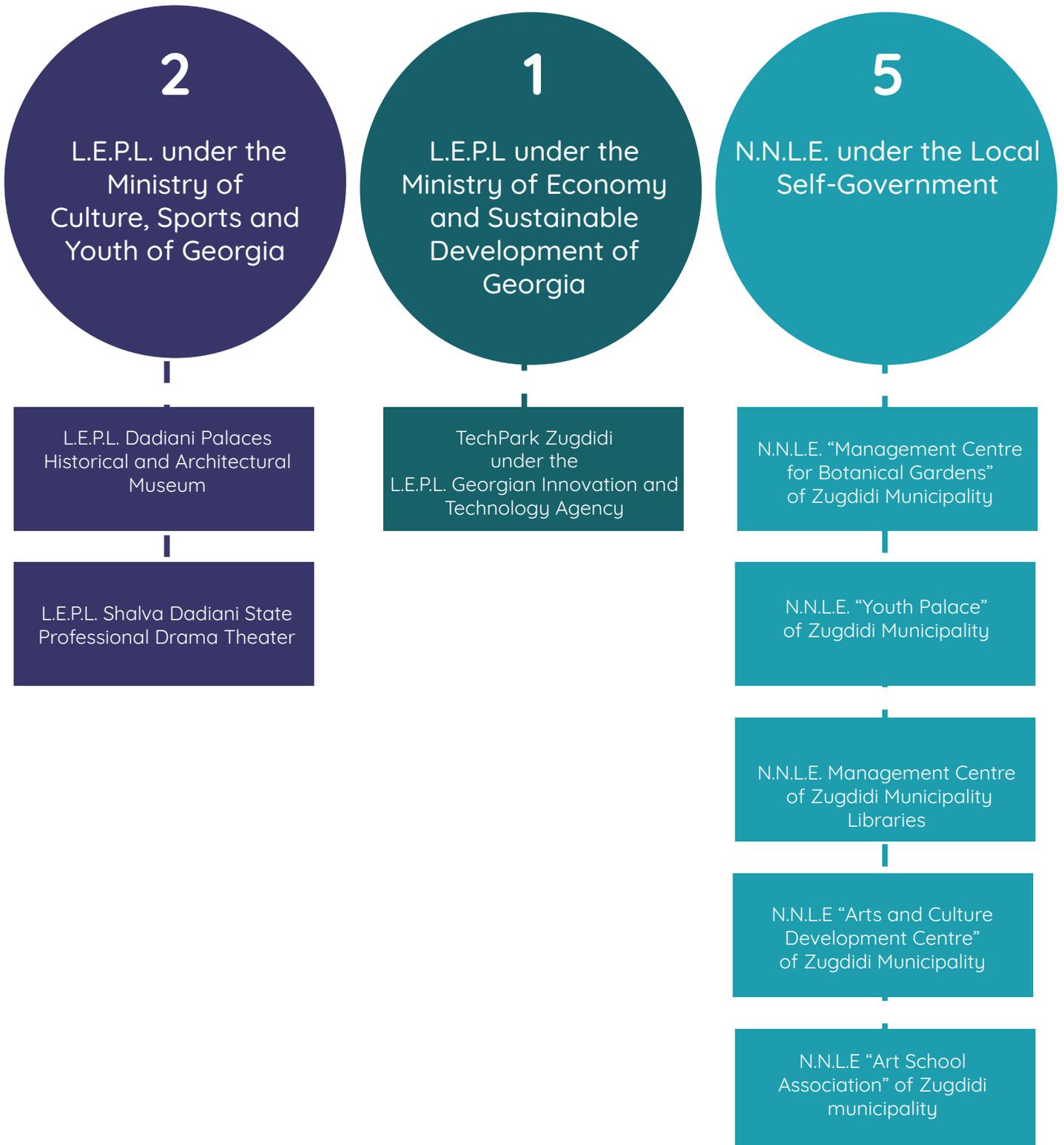


# Zugdidi Population

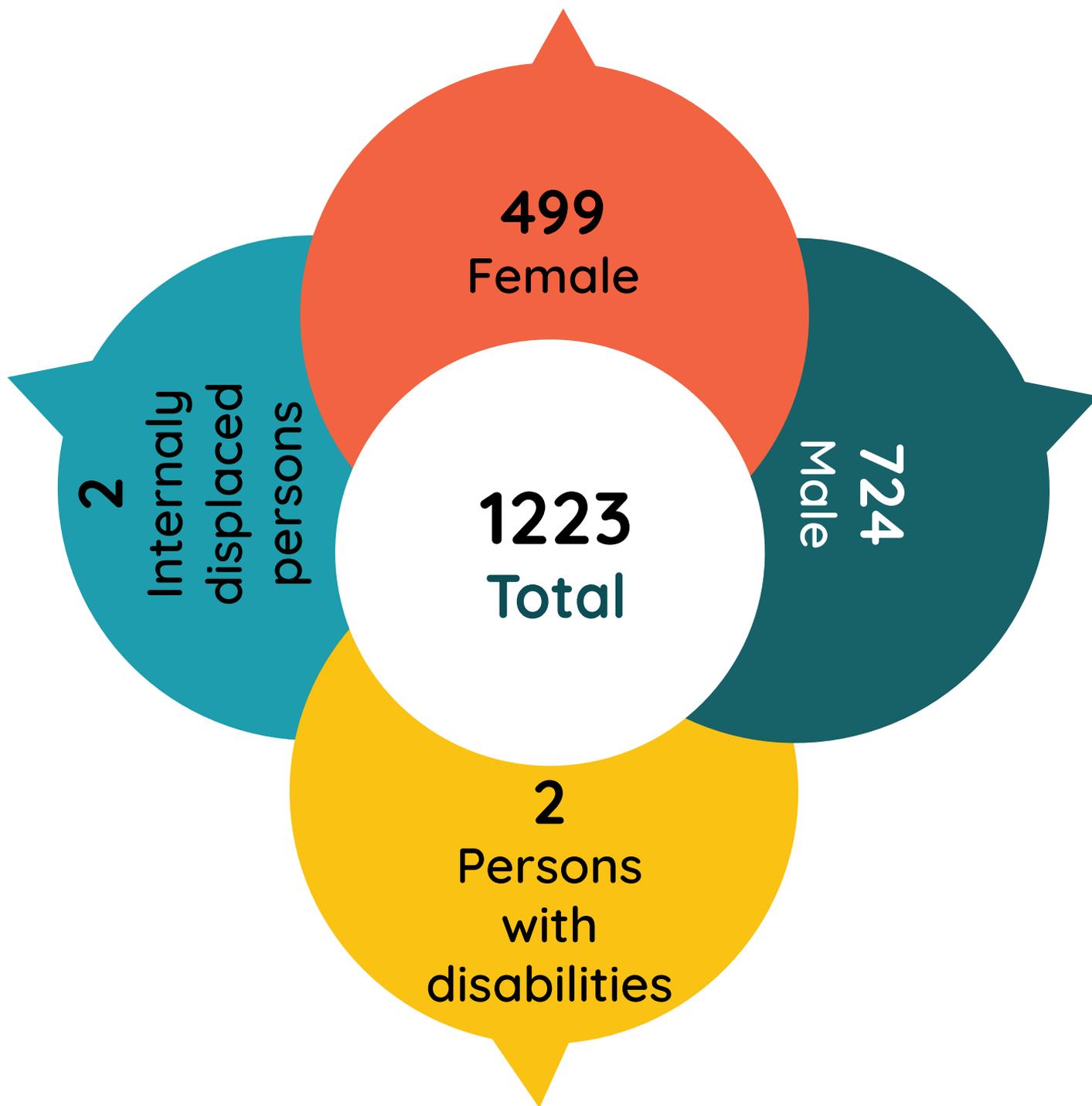


# Public Cultural Institutions

## Number of Cultural Institutions under the State and Local Self-Government



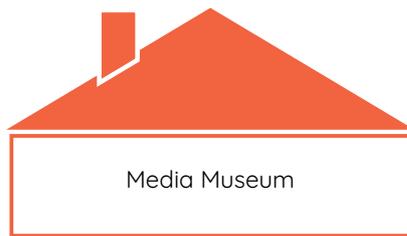
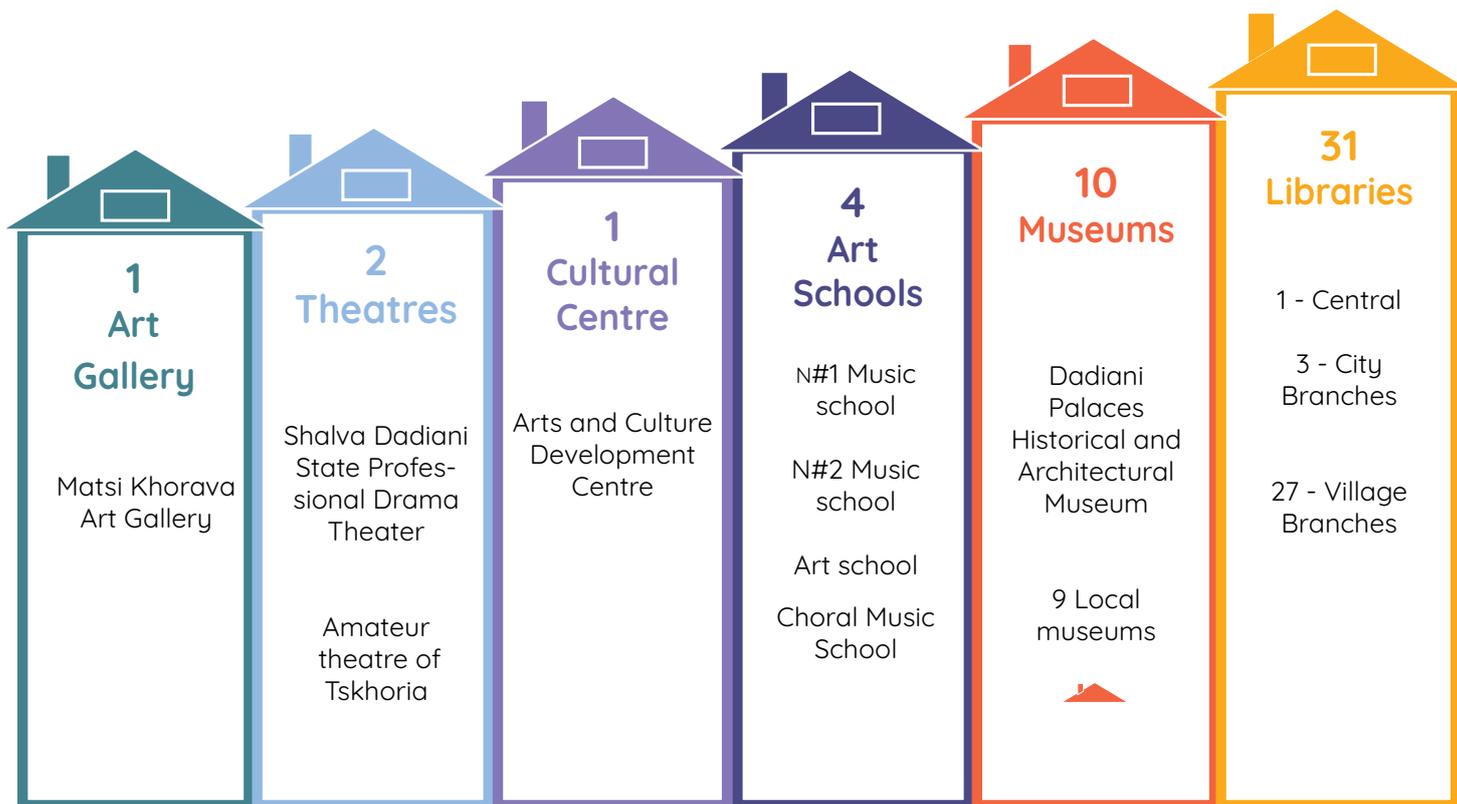
# Employment at Public Cultural Institutions



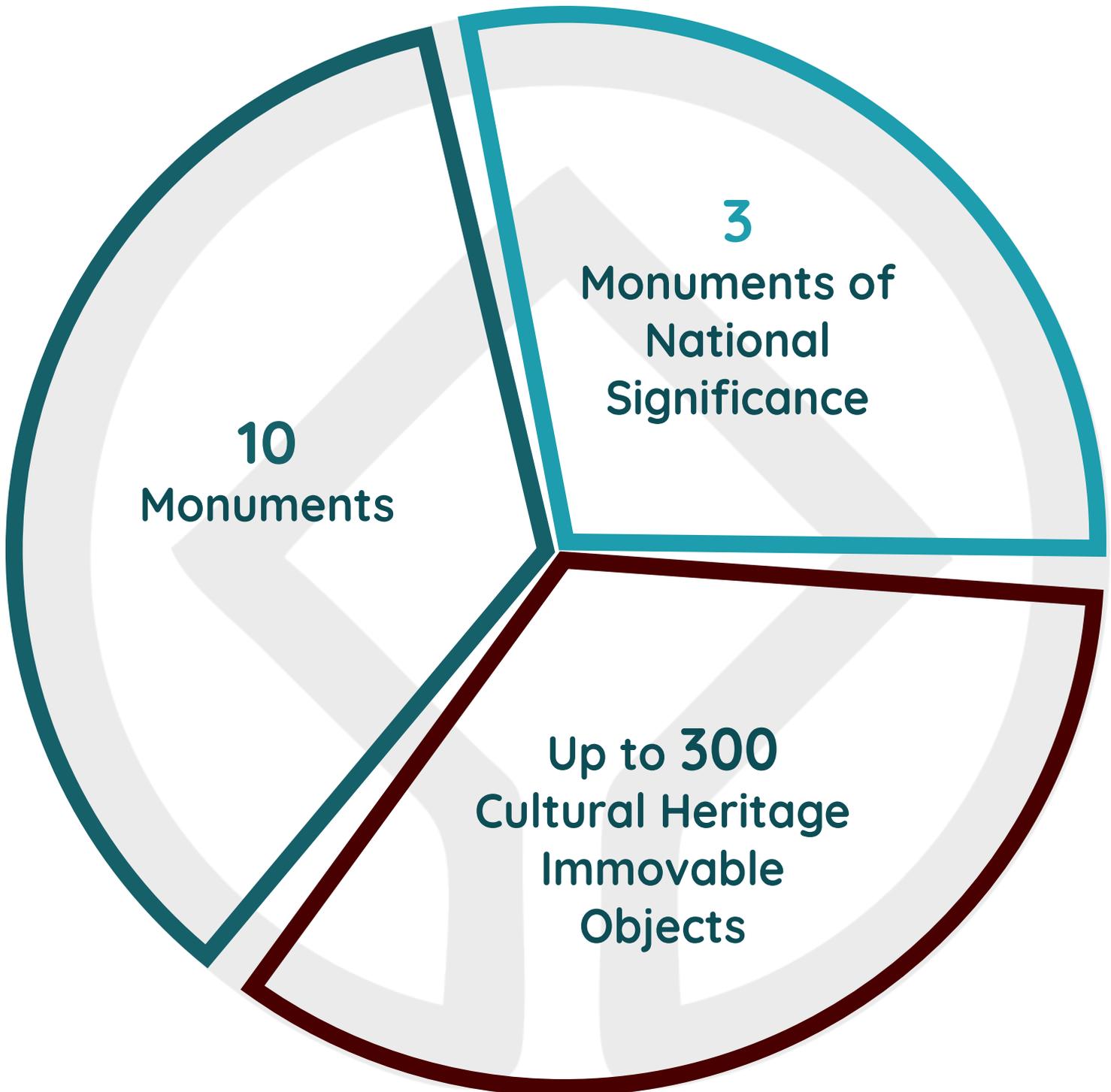
2.85% of local population is working in public cultural institutions under the state and local self-government.

0.61% of internally displaced persons registered in the municipality are working in public cultural institutions under the state and local self-government.

# 50 Cultural Facilities



# Tangible Cultural Heritage

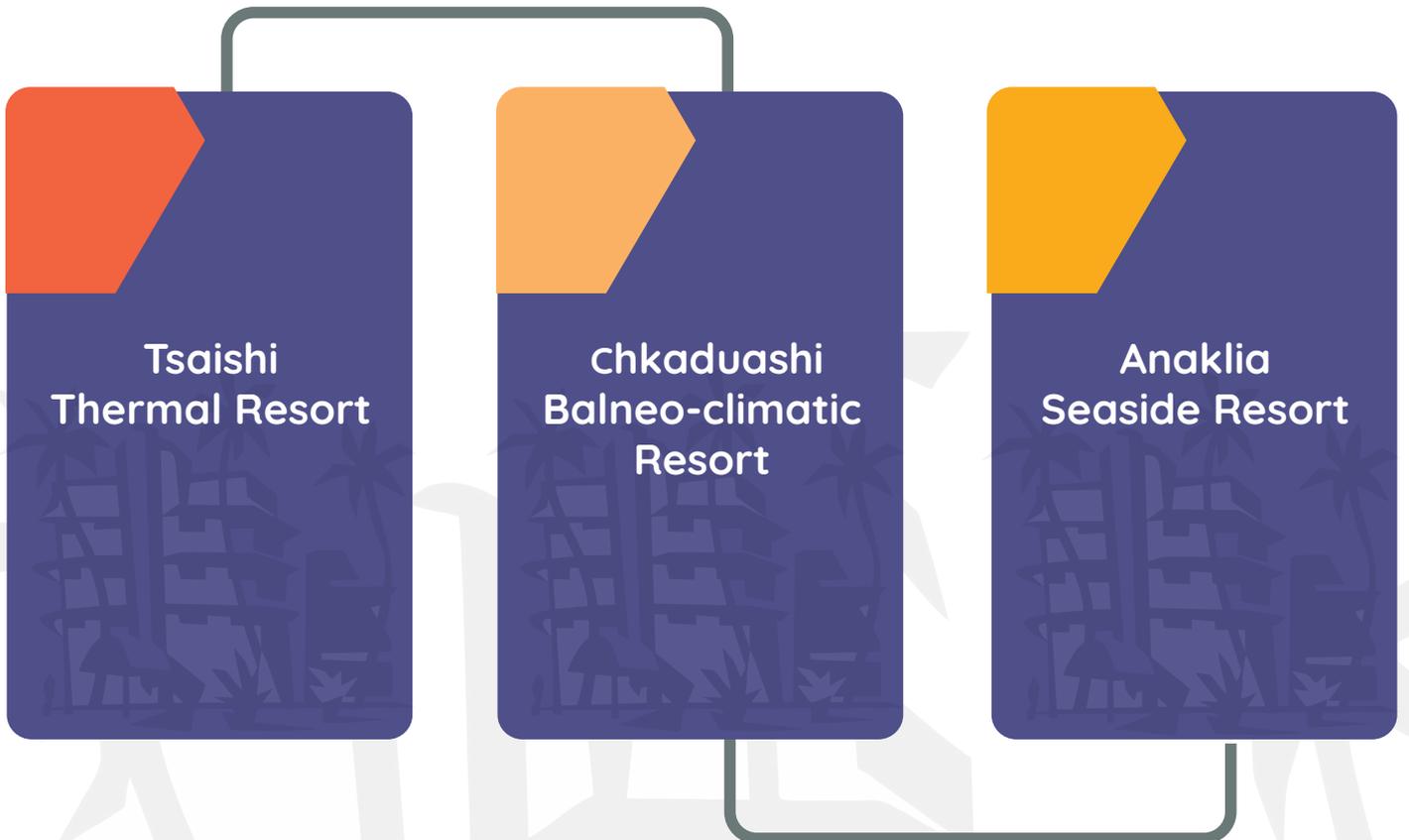


# 9 Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage



# Resorts and Recreation

## 3 Distinct Resorts



# 10 Parks and Public Gardens are located in Zugdidi Municipality

Zugdidi Botanical Garden

Zugdidi Central Boulevard from XIXc.

Zugdidi Central Park - “Skate Park”

European [French] Park in Zugdidi

Iona Meunargia Public Garden

9 April Park

Veterans’ Alley and Square in Zugdidi

Boulevard and Aquapark in Ganmukhuri

Recreation Park of Anaklia

“Emigrants’ Garden” in Village October



# Higher and Vocational Education

1 University and 2 Professional Colleges

Shota Meskhia State  
Teaching University of  
Zugdidi

College  
„Tskhum-Egrisi”

Public College „Zugdidi  
Academy”

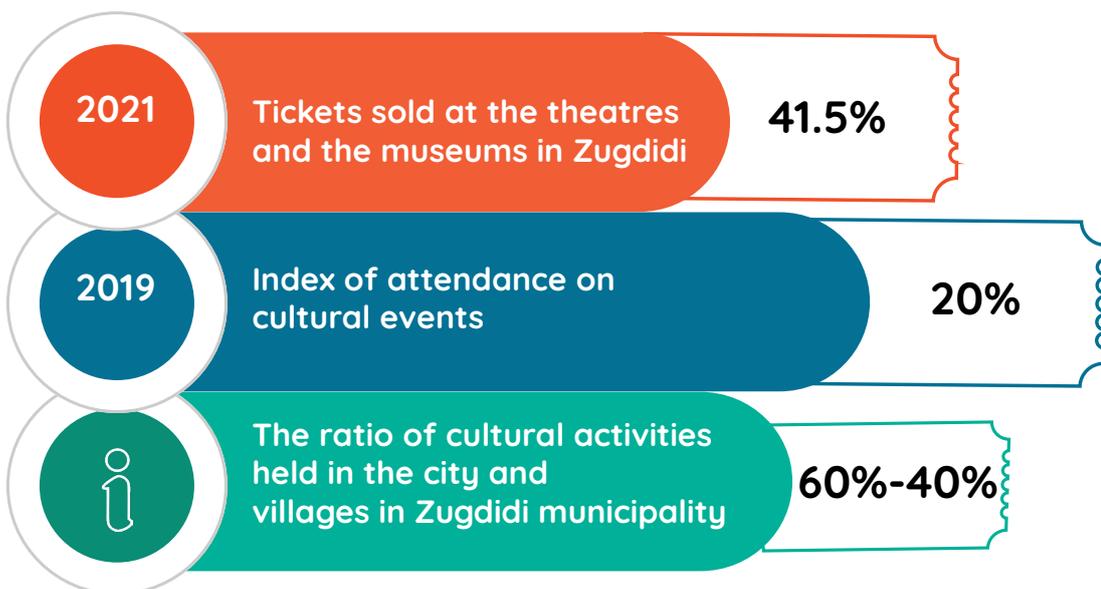
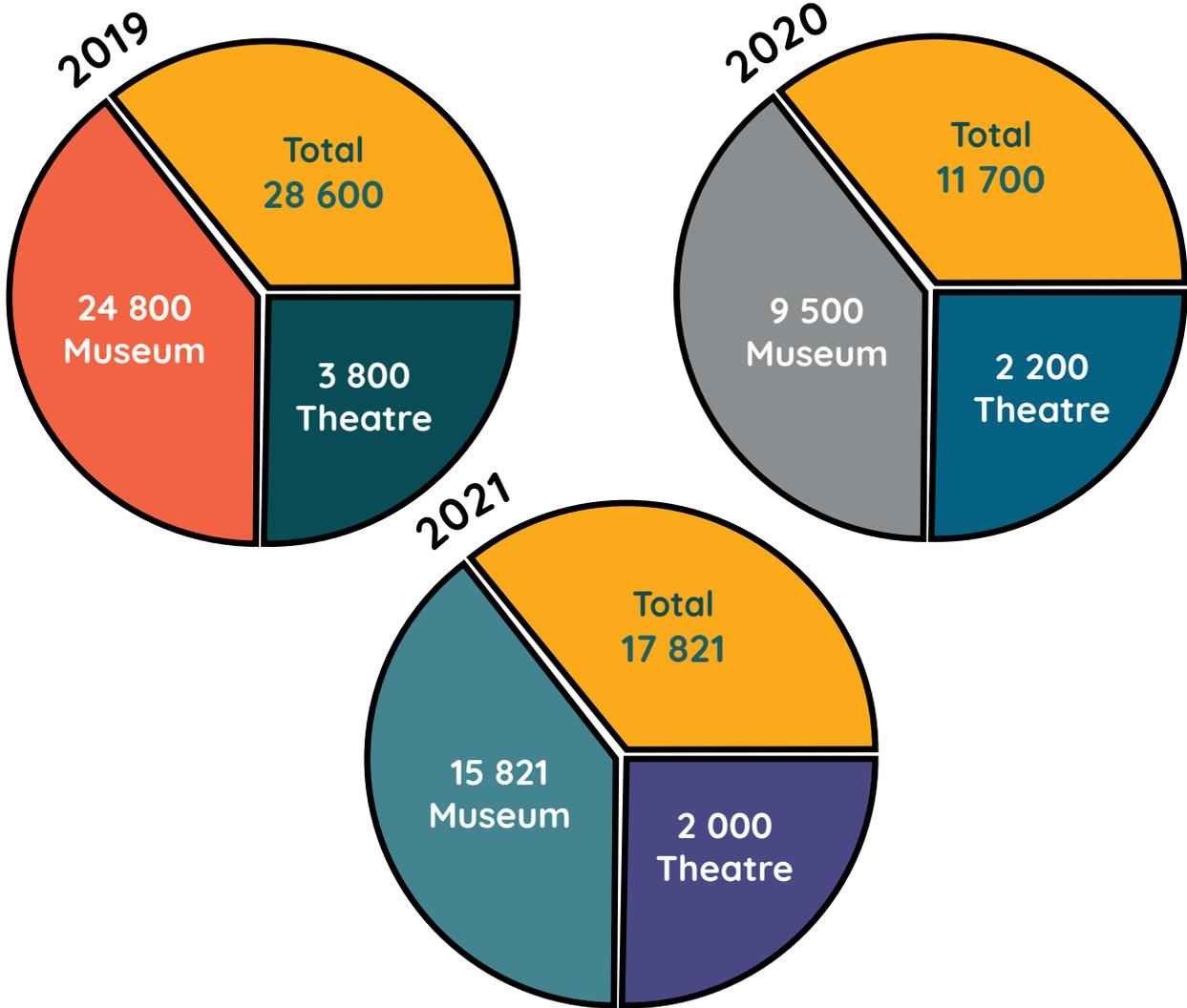


# Cultural Activities

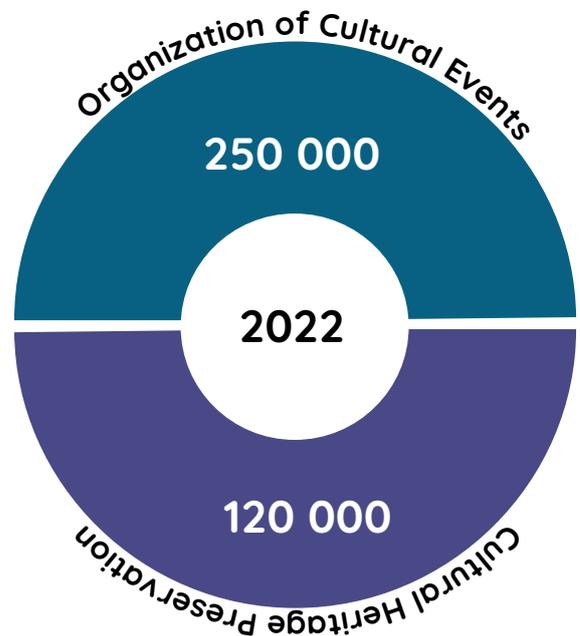
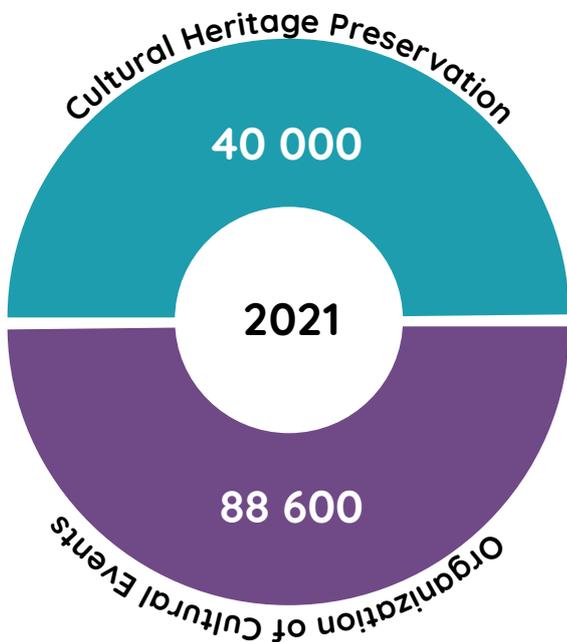
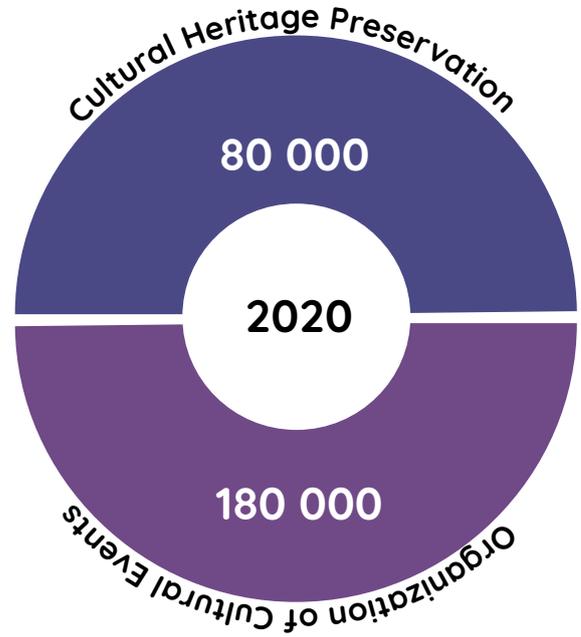
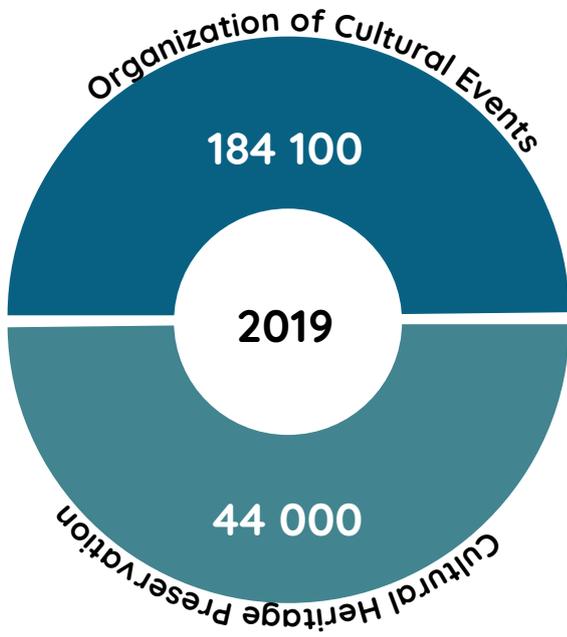
Zugdidi Municipality is hosting the following Festivals

-  „Literary-Folklore Festival of Caucasian People”
-  „Zugdidoba”
-  „Honey Festival”
-  „Vlakernoba”
-  “Kolkhi da...” Polikarpe Khubulava International Festival of Megrelian Folk
-  „Tkhiloba”
-  “Dia” - Festival of Colchic Wine
-  „Youth Festival”
-  „Ajika festivali”
-  „Strawberry Festival”
-  „Anaklioba”
-  „Khachapuri Festival”
-  „ART kolkhi” - International Music Festival
-  “F5” - Festival of Modern Art
-  GEM Fest - Electronic Music Festival

# Number of Sold Tickets in 2019-2021



# Municipality Program-based funding



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## Table of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
CoE	Council of Europe
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
CDS	Cultural Development Strategy
CH	Cultural Heritage
CCI	Cultural and Creative Industries
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage

# Foreword

**Mamuka Tsotseria,**  
Mayor of Zugdidi Municipality



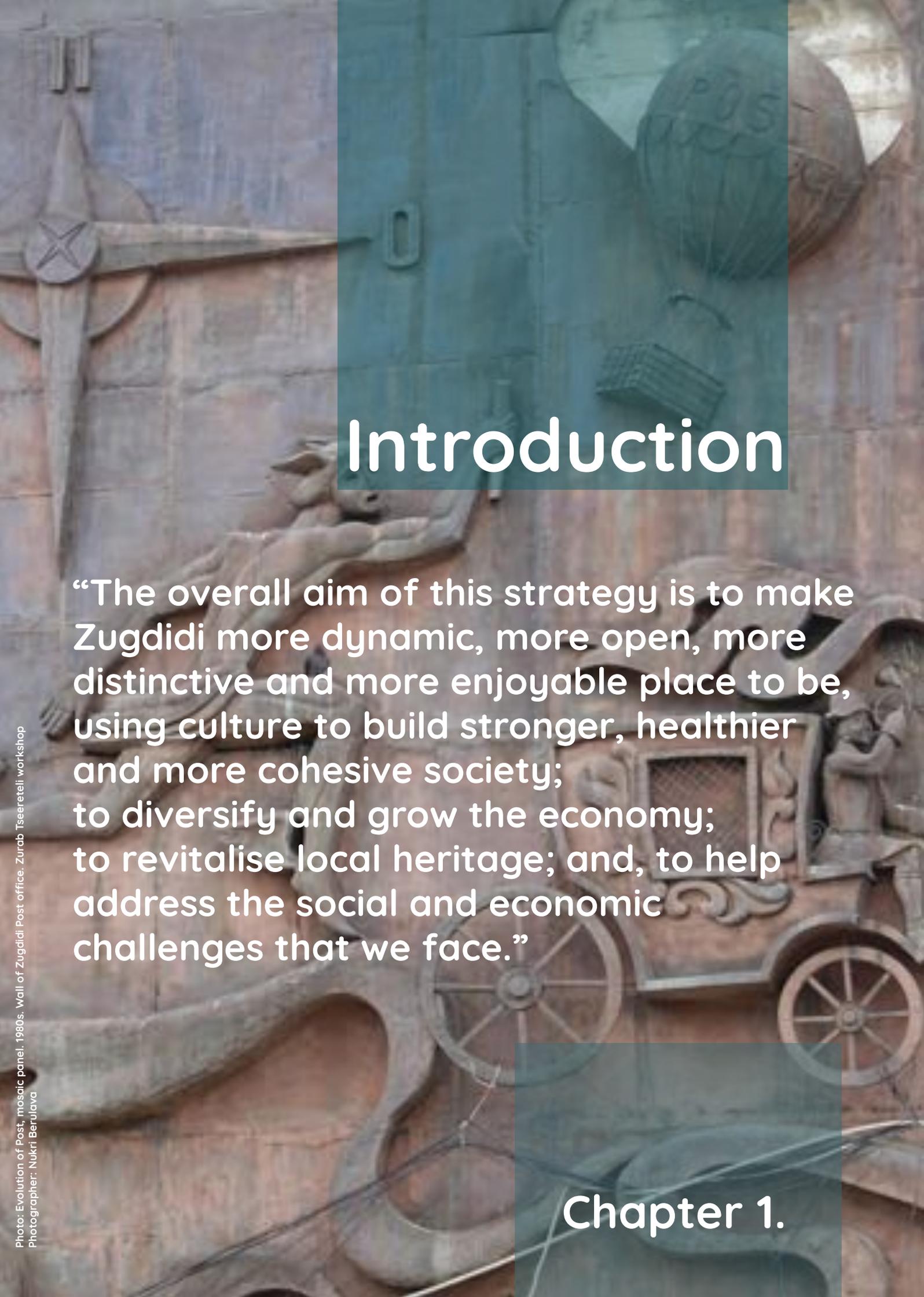
Culture is the source of inspiration, public awareness-raising, education and aesthetics, intellect, spirituality, economic development, and an essential prerequisite for forming a harmonious society. Caring for our cultural heritage and systematic development of contemporary art are among this city's top priorities and are crucial for the well-being of our community.

Elaboration process of this Cultural Development Strategy (CDS) has no less importance. It has allowed us to consolidate views and opinions of local target and professional groups – public and private sectors, public and private cultural institutions and NGOs active in the field; sectoral experts; young, emerging and independent artists; local private sector representatives; individual entrepreneurs and other interested stakeholders. Thanks to their active involvement, an open and transparent public discussion was held regarding the city's cultural needs and challenges, priority objectives, as well as short- and long-term goals for cultural development.

While facing global challenges to preserve local cultural identity and connect it to the modern world, drafting of the CDS has immense importance - it is an unprecedented occasion in the history of Zugdidi and entire region. A CDS is a fundamental document, developed with the help as well as active participation and contribution of the local community. It's a contemporary model of a successful cooperation between the local authorities and community, based on transparency and equal partnership.

The CDS puts responsibility and an obligation for local authorities and the community to give our unwavering support and backing to our culture and creativity.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the European Union, Goethe Institute, Czech Centers, Danish Cultural Institute, French Institute for their help and support during the drafting of CDS as well as Creative Spark (Georgia), Creative Strategies Lab (Georgia), Creativity Lab (Estonia), Culture Venture (Malta), for their close cooperation and expertise. We would like to thank our expert-consultants: Mr. Levan Kharatishvili, Mr. Ragnar Siil, Mr. Toni Attard, Ms. Elina Gedenidze and Ms. Tamar Meliva for their valuable expertise and contribution. Most importantly, we would like to extend our gratitude to public, private, and non-governmental cultural organizations, professionals from cultural and creative sectors, and artists, along with each individual and organization involved in this process and contributed to the elaboration of this strategy.



# Introduction

“The overall aim of this strategy is to make Zugdidi more dynamic, more open, more distinctive and more enjoyable place to be, using culture to build stronger, healthier and more cohesive society; to diversify and grow the economy; to revitalise local heritage; and, to help address the social and economic challenges that we face.”

Chapter 1.

This 5-year cultural development strategy, first for Zugdidi, outlines the overarching and transversal cultural themes as well as priorities for the city, along with outlining objectives, possibilities and perspectives for the years 2022 to 2026.

The CDS was developed by Zugdidi Municipality City Hall with the support of EU4Culture<sup>1</sup> project, financed by the European Union and implemented by Goethe Institute, Czech Centers, Danish Cultural Institute, and French Institute, as well as with the support of Creative Spark (Georgia), Creative Strategies Lab (Georgia), Creativity Lab (Estonia), Culture Venture (Malta).

The strategy draws on the themes raised by many individuals across Zugdidi Municipality who took active part in our culture conversation and a public consultation which began in 2021. It sets out a collaborative vision for culture and the guiding principles, ambitions and aims which will enable it to continue to flourish, evolve, and help to stimulate its transformational power across society.

Zugdidi CDS is an overarching strategy and sits in synergy with existing strategies and is in full compliance with the local and national legislation as well as international conventions regulating culture and creative industries sectors. It is based on the Cultural Strategy of Georgia “Culture 2025”<sup>2</sup>, while taking into consideration other regional or national strategic documents and action plans; it also implies the usage of existing tangible or intangible cultural resources in a way, that would contribute to the successful implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (FARO Convention, 2005) as well as achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and Targets.

During elaboration of this strategy, the impact of economic, social, and environmental factors on culture and creative industries sectors was taken into consideration, as well as their close links to

cultural tourism and regional development. By carefully planning out consistent development and adequate usage of culture and cultural resources, this strategy will serve to strengthen the local communities, as well as, support and promotion of local culture and heritage as shared European values, with the goal of their successful and sustainable integration within the pan-European cultural map.

In light of existing challenges, culture and creative industries need development-oriented enabling environment, based on open dialogue and collaboration, in line with the principles of “good governance”. The prerequisite of success for Zugdidi CDS lies in well-thought-out, targeted cooperation, and strong partnerships between various sectors. The backbone of this strategy are people, that create, serve and enjoy culture on daily basis. It’s crucial, that local culture becomes accessible for each member of our society, as a part of their daily life, as a mean of socio-economic development, as a process of interdisciplinary cooperation, and as a source of inspiration and employment. These key principals are reflected as **Transversal Priorities**, which, along with the **Strategic Ambitions** defined in this CDS, are fully in line with the main priorities and goals of the Culture Strategy 2025.

The first CDS for the city, along with the action plan for its implementation, was approved by Sakrebulo (City Council) of Zugdidi Municipality on May 20, 2022. The CDS is based on the priorities, urgent issues, and challenges identified during public consultations by artists and cultural professionals, public and private cultural organizations, private sector representatives, youth, and the local population in general. Therefore, this strategy draws on the themes raised by many individuals across Zugdidi who took part in our culture conversation and a public consultation which began in 2021.

<sup>1</sup>EU4Culture is a 4-year (2021-2014) project financed by the European Union, purpose of which is to increase involvement of cultural and creative industries within the country’s economic and social development process. To achieve this, the project helps cities to draft cultural development strategies, in correspondence with the approaches found in the European capitals. Additionally, the project provides financing for mobility programs for artists and cultural professionals, as well as support for festivals, cultural and innovative projects. 70 cities of 5 Eastern Partnership countries (Azerbaijan, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Ukraine) have participated within the EU4Culture project. Zugdidi was selected among 70 participating cities, which implies, that Zugdidi has the chance to participate in a competition, alongside other two Georgian cities, to receive 300.000 Euros funding for the implementation of CDS.

<sup>2</sup>Approved by the N303 Decree of the Government of Georgia - July 1, 2016

Public consultations made it clear, that the local population is unanimous in the assessing of particular historical and cultural context and features of Zugdidi, attributing special importance to the development, marketing, re-branding, representation and promotion of these unique values and resources. Based on the aforesaid, City has outlined three main strategic themes and ambitions that position city as:

**Zugdidi:**

- 1) **City of Cultural Heritage Innovation**
- 2) **Creative City of Arts and Crafts**
- 3) **Creative City of Gastronomy**

The consultations also revealed other transversal priorities, that the city should focus on, to successfully implement its strategy. These priorities are:

1. **Human Capital: Capacity Building and Innovation**
2. **Audience Development and Engagement**
3. **Encouragement of Cooperation and Partnership**
4. **Culture Management and Support**
5. **Establishment and Development of Creative Spaces**
6. **Promotion and Internationalization of Culture**

CDS contains specific actions for each theme, which will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis. It's important, that this document acts as a "living strategy", that is flexible and adaptable – along with the dynamic changes of the city. Contents of the strategy are derived from the cultural sector and the main interested parties and stakeholders; thus, its successful implementation is a collective responsibility.

Through these acknowledged main strategic ambitions and transversal priorities, the CDS produced a new, more explicit vision for the development of the central city of the region, which uses its cultural capital and assets as a catalyst of socio-economic growth for integrated and inclusive future. It will fulfil the goals and aspirations of Zugdidi and its citizens, transferring both the city and the region from a complex and challenging past – toward a confident future.

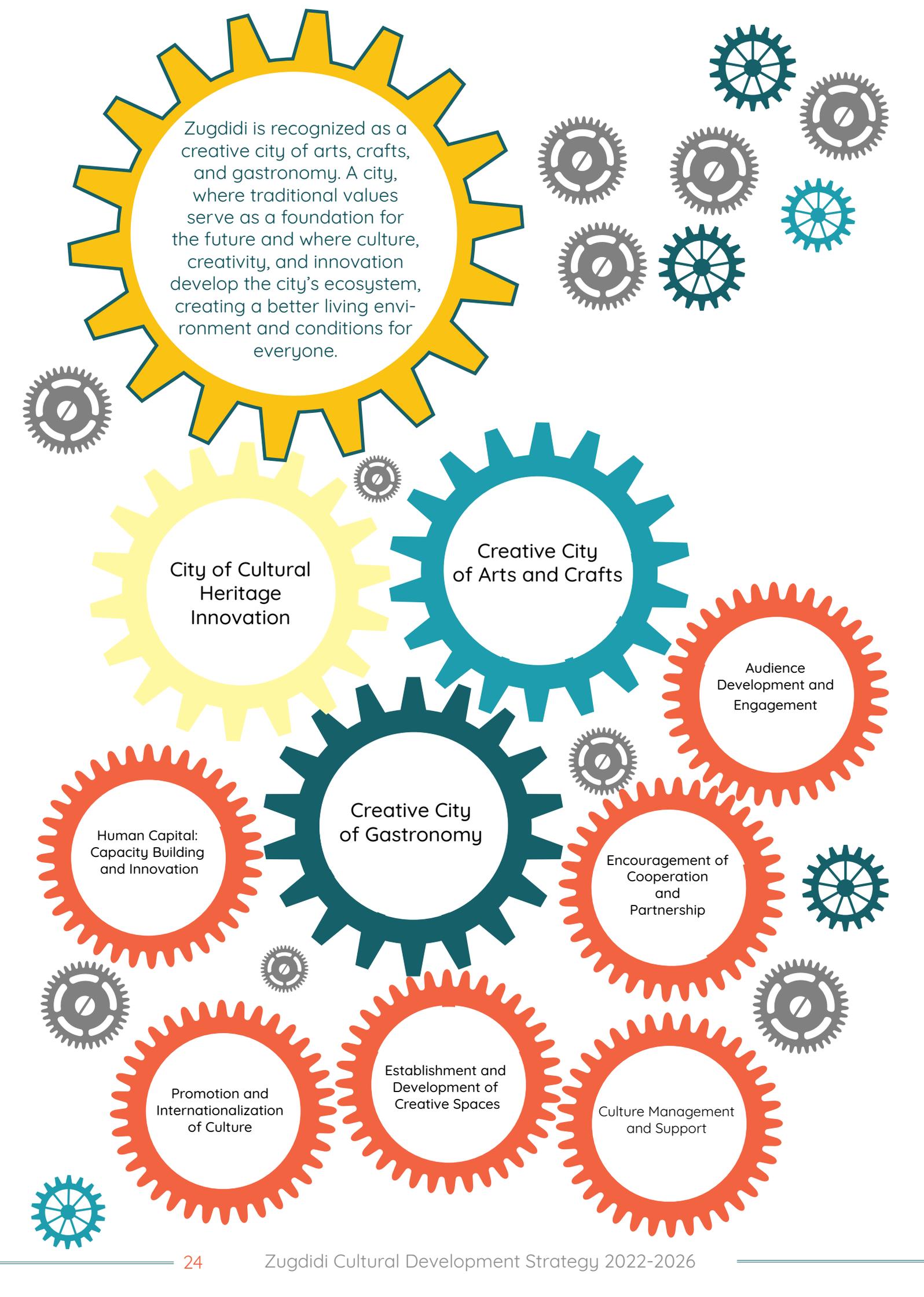
In order to ensure sustainable and consistent development of cultural and creative sectors in Zugdidi as well as establish an enabling environment, it is of paramount importance to stimulate, develop and promote all sectors of culture equal-



**“This vision for culture in Zugdidi is underpinned by a series of ambitions and aims. It sets out the priorities for action which will shape how culture is supported in Zugdidi over the coming years.”**

ly. As an example, the purpose of theatre may be viewed not just through traditional theatrical plays staged in the theatre building, but it may rather have a more important role in conducting large-scale cultural events, both through theatrical performances and directing as well as arranging decorations. This can become a precondition for the success, popularity and attractiveness of large-scale local and international conceptual festivals. Alongside the theatre, visual arts and music require new concepts and approaches to help them position successfully on local, national and international realm. This will ultimately contribute to creating new opportunities and employment possibilities.

It should also be noted, that Zugdidi, as a conflict-prone city, has a new functional purpose and it has become an important springboard for the population living in occupied Abkhazia to share both trade-economic relations and cultural-creative life trends. Ethnic Abkhazians come to Zugdidi for various international festivals and local events for fear of the Russian occupation regime, while maintaining strict anonymity. This factor defines an entirely new political and cultural mission for Zugdidi – to become a creative **City of Peace**, considering its painful history and experiences. With this in mind, the Bertha von Suttner Peace prize was established in 2019. The project was implemented by the Peace Institute for Progress (PIP), in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Austria in Georgia, with support from the Southern Caucasus Office of Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and under the auspices of Zugdidi Municipality. The aim of the Bertha von Suttner Peace Prize is to appreciate the contribution of activists involved in the peacebuilding and strengthening process, to bring peace to the community, and to encourage young people to build trust. Most importantly, the Bertha von Suttner Peace Prize is the first award in the field of peace in Georgia and is given annually in Zugdidi - a city that has served as a moderator/mediator in communities divided by armed conflict and still bears this important mission.



Zugdidi is recognized as a creative city of arts, crafts, and gastronomy. A city, where traditional values serve as a foundation for the future and where culture, creativity, and innovation develop the city's ecosystem, creating a better living environment and conditions for everyone.

City of Cultural Heritage Innovation

Creative City of Arts and Crafts

Audience Development and Engagement

Human Capital: Capacity Building and Innovation

Creative City of Gastronomy

Encouragement of Cooperation and Partnership

Promotion and Internationalization of Culture

Establishment and Development of Creative Spaces

Culture Management and Support

## 1.2

# Why Do We Need a Cultural Development Strategy

First of all, we need the CDS, because we never had a consistent vision and an actual plan for local cultural development, that would be well comprehended and acceptable for our society. In light of existing challenges, that has been accumulated in our city over the past years, Zugdidi and its society need to re-imagine and re-invent ourselves, by embracing and fully using our cultural and creative resources and assets, while fully realizing and developing our unused and untapped possibilities and potential.

The economic, social and industrial stagnation in Georgia during 90s, has left its mark on Zugdidi as well. The unrealized potential of the Zugdidi population is connected to this period. Growing levels of external migration – the massive outflow of the population is one of the main challenges this city still faces.

Historically, Zugdidi has always been the inheritor and a flagship of cultural, social and spiritual sustainability, which requires internal recognition, a creative approach, and provision of appropriate support. Only then will the city regain confidence, motivation and pride. This is a precondition for creating a dignified future on local, national and international levels.

Unfortunately, the general context of culture in Zugdidi has not been properly understood so far, the existing information is fragmented, however, in order to achieve sustainable development, it is important to analyse the past and the present and take them into account while planning the future.

One of the key instruments for building such a future is a CDS, which with holistic approach, defines integrated cultural, societal, social, and economic development for the city, as an inter-sectoral, inclusive, and all-encompassing document. The strategy needs to be accessible to each citizen, each member of our society and it needs to become one of the main vectors of practical renewal of this city, the main priority of which would be to develop and activate its untapped potential on national, regional and international levels.

Zugdidi qualifies for every condition for such positioning and now is the time to activate the process of CDS. This is a unique opportunity for this city to



“Culture is in Zugdidi’s DNA.”

become a leader. For its citizens – especially the youth, this is a chance to decide what they want their city to be like, and find new ways and means for achieving it. This is exactly why it is so important for Zugdidi to be supported by EU4Culture project on all phases of the CDS elaboration: during primary analysis, as well as its further implementation period.

During the drafting of this CDS, it became clear, that the cultural and natural resources will be a strong foundation for the future, despite the challenges and problems our city faces. Zugdidi has a long road ahead, but this city will need to rethink its future, through the lens of its unique potential.

The next step is to present this new future both to Georgian as well as international community. This will require effective use of communication, promotion and presentation means. Concurrently, the plan involves a consistent realization of identified initiatives as well as achievement of strategic aspirations and ambitions outlined by the Zugdidi CDS. These measures are designed to attract investments, especially, if support of the EU4Culture project will be secured during the implementation phase.

Thus, Zugdidi CDS establishes a unified vision for culture and creative industries, guiding principles, ambitions and goals, that will stimulate and support city's sustainable development.

CDS outlines the city's cultural and creative resources, main cultural assets, and its potential, while defining the transversal role of culture and creativity in developing Zugdidi through holistic approach.



Photo: Soviet period mosaics from 1980s

## Our strategy:

Explores, measures and highlights the asset base for culture in Zugdidi

Provides an overview of key cultural assets, the distinctive role that culture and creative industries are playing, a gap analysis and recommendations for building capacity and leveraging strengths so that culture can play a key strategic role in the development of Zugdidi

Defines the special place and role that culture and creative industries have in strengthening the community and in turn, sustainable socio-economic growth of Zugdidi

Makes the strategic case for culture – as a crucial element for civil society, inclusive growth, and sustainable approaches to community and place

Provides opportunities for collaboration and benchmarking with other regions in Georgia, across Europe and the rest of the World – so that Zugdidi can be both a pathfinder and a partner to best practice culture-led development.

The city of Zugdidi is rich with its diverse resources, that could allow for unique and sustainable development, although, as of now, it is impossible to fully utilize its potential and possibilities, due to various reasons.

For the purposes of this CDS, “culture” is understood by its broad definition, which encompasses the everyday life of Zugdidi and Zugdidians, their identity, language, heritage, traditions, museums, local music halls, theatres, libraries, festivals, traditional holidays and festivities, galleries, events and of course – local artists, professionals, performers, musicians, writers, and local creative people in general.



To support the growth of value and impact of culture and creative industries in Zugdidi and highlight the role it plays in overcoming the socio-economic challenges, we defined the main objectives of this strategy:



Additionally, recognition from the EU4Culture program will increase the city's self-esteem, confidence, faith and motivation, significantly aid in increasing the scales and impacting the timetable and an action plan, allowing us to achieve the ambitious goals within our CDS.

## 1.3

# What Makes Zugdidi Special

For Zugdidi, culture is a unique and important treasure, which organically merges traditions and modernity, along with constant self-renewal rooted in the rich creative potential of the city and the whole region. This is conditioned by a number of factors, stemming from the municipality, among them being: the ancient culture of the Bronze Age of Colchis, ancient civilization and Christian culture, unique cultural and historical monuments and museums, caves and caverns, places for rafting and picnicking, the wetlands of Kolkheti and its rare natural beauty, incredibly high mountains of Zemo-Svaneti, Black Sea basin and developing resort zones. Across Zugdidi Municipality, the cultural contribution of past generations is everywhere to see, hear and inspire. Cultural activity takes place across the city every day and is expressed in a wide variety of ways from the established to the informal, emerging and grassroots. Zugdidi has a distinct and diverse cultural heritage and landscape, conceptualized in local folklore, historical monuments, crafts, and gastronomy. Zugdidi is rich with creatively talented people and the environment. This is a place, where culture and creativity are valued, preserved, and developed.

Cultural elements that lack a physical form but are instead expressed through knowledge, traditions, skills or rituals are equally important to shaping living culture. These include artistic performances, festivals, social practices, oral heritage, folklore, language and dialects, craftsmanship, and of course, gastronomic traditions.

Gastronomy, craftsmanship, folklore – traditions and products associated with them, have the high potential to stimulate and support in exploring and nurturing local creative minds...; promote innovative approaches; motivate and empower as well as provide employment opportunities; raise awareness and popularity of Zugdidi; make the city more



**“CDS sets out a vision which recognizes the intrinsic value of creativity and the power of culture to inspire , enrich and transform people’s lives, our community and the place where we live, work and have fun.”**

attractive and turn it into a tourist destination, both on local and international levels, which will, in turn, support development of the local economy.

Despite all said, Zugdidi has never had an adopted culture strategy. Thus, keeping in mind the local context and specificity, existing needs and challenges, cultural and creative resources and potential, as well as other local, regional, and international tendencies and factors, the development and adoption of the Zugdidi CDS is timely and extremely important. It is in harmony with the city’s socio-economic, political and cultural objectives and will aid in the vibrant and dynamic development of the city. We believe, that culture and creativity can play a decisive role in the social and economic development of Zugdidi and contribute to creating an attractive living environment for our society.

# Our Vision and Mission

Photo: "Koiikhis Nana" - Treasure of Tsaisi, VIII-VII cc. BC. Copy of Coldic Sculpture, Dadiani Palace. Copy is made by Jumber Jikia.  
Opening of the sculpture was held in 2016, by the Municipality.  
Photographer: Eguja Khubutia



## Chapter 2

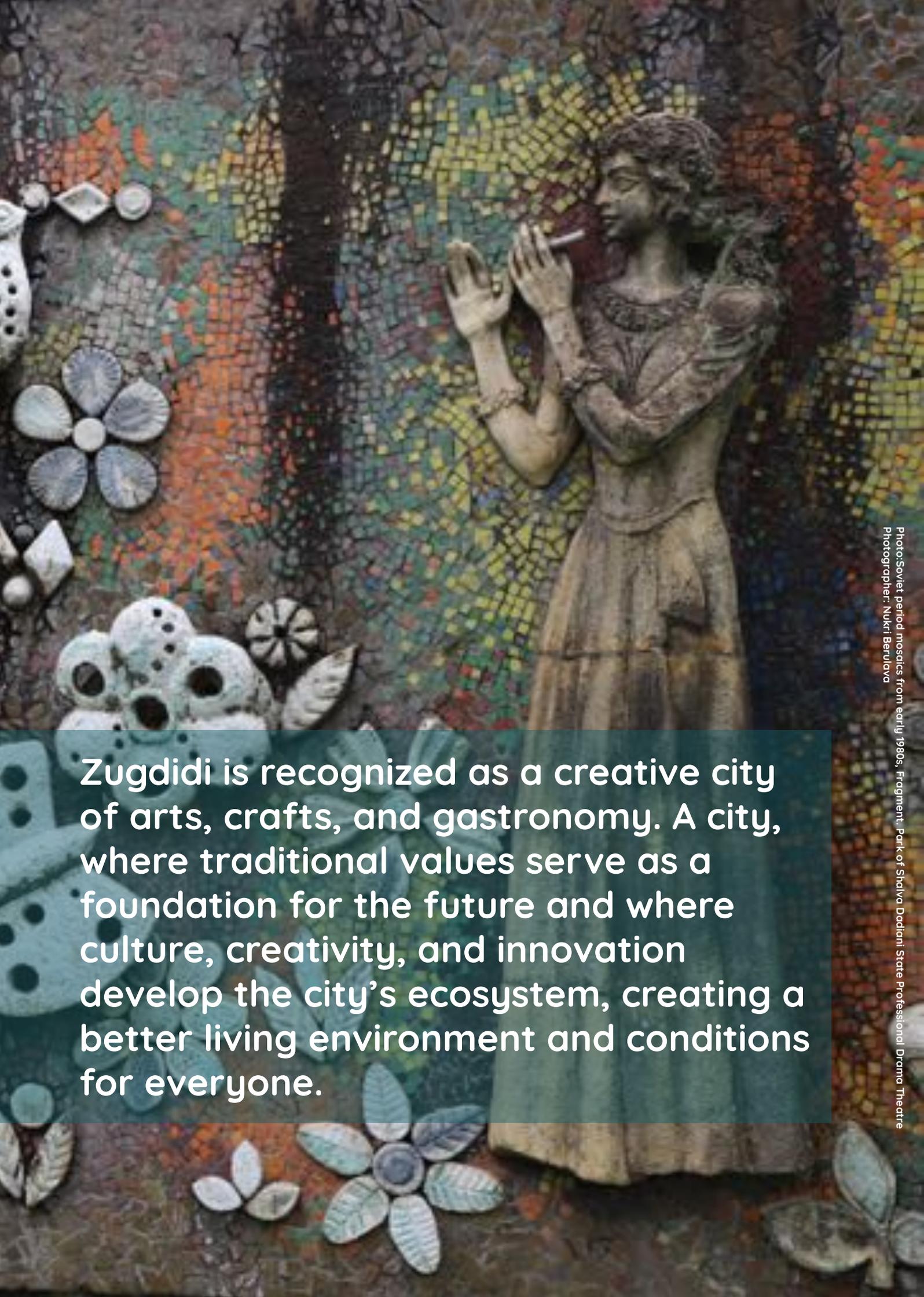


Photo: Soviet period mosaics from early 1980s, Fragment: Park of Shalva Dadiani State Professional Drama Theatre  
Photographer: Nukri Berulava

Zugdidi is recognized as a creative city of arts, crafts, and gastronomy. A city, where traditional values serve as a foundation for the future and where culture, creativity, and innovation develop the city's ecosystem, creating a better living environment and conditions for everyone.



**Zugdidi is recognized as a creative city of arts, crafts, and gastronomy. A city, where traditional values serve as a foundation for the future and where culture, creativity, and innovation develop the city’s ecosystem, creating a better living environment and conditions for everyone.**

Zugdidi CDS highlights how important culture, creativity, and innovation are for the welfare of Zugdidi and its society – they define ways of stimulating culture and creativity; It sets out a vision which recognises the spill-over effect and intrinsic value of creativity and the power of culture to inspire, enrich and transform people’s lives, our community and the place where we live, work and have fun.

While developing the strategy document, our main objective was to define unique selling points and societal values of Zugdidi, that could serve as points of collaboration between citizens and authorities of the city, now and in future. Naturally, with its unique, rich and multifaceted historical-cultural potential, Zugdidi will use these assets as a starting point.

The strategy considers culture as one of the driving forces and fuels of local economy, which directly and indirectly, contributes to its development. As follows, objectives outlined within this document are designed to serve this purpose, so that the development of culture and preservation of our legacy are beneficial – with cultural growth and conservation of cultural heritage on one hand and benefits, such as creation of new jobs for the local population, on the other hand – all of this ultimately leading to sustainable city development.

**“Culture is the gateway to people’s history, identity, language and hope. It is also a tool for rebirth.”**

The mission of Zugdidi CDS is to strengthen the local community, support biodiversity, preserve tangible and intangible cultural heritage, safeguard and promote Mingrelian language, and ensure a better quality of life by raising awareness of cultural and gastronomical<sup>3</sup> distinctiveness. An additional goal of this strategy is to ensure proper conservation and demonstration of traditions, Mingrelian language, folklore, ethno-gastronomy, authentic cuisine, traditional recipes, and crafts, through innovative approaches.

All stakeholders in Zugdidi realize the importance of arts and crafts, gastronomy, and cultural heritage as a booster of regional and national economic development and a mean for tourism diversification. Enhancement of these sectors will undoubtedly have a positive impact on creation of new jobs and overall enabling environment for cultural development.

It is vital to underpin that other areas, such as literature, publishing, visual and performing arts, music, fine arts, photography and cinematography, as well as fashion, design and architecture are equally important to the city. Implementation of Zugdidi CDS will create various opportunities for cross-sectorial cooperation and a favorable environment for the harmonious and sustainable development of all these sectors.

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<sup>3</sup>According to creative industries classification, based on NACE rev 2 (Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community), gastronomy and culinary industry, along with crafts and other sectors are a part of creative industry sectors.

Zugdidi is recognized as a creative city of arts, crafts, and gastronomy. A city, where traditional values serve as a foundation for the future and where culture, creativity, and innovation develop the city's ecosystem, creating a better living environment and conditions for everyone.



# Strategic Ambitions

## Chapter 3

Photo: Stylized from medallion, VII-VII cc. BC, Ergeta, Interpretation on "Colchic Panel" by Robert Absarade, ceramic artist, Photographer: Nukri Berulava



# Zugdidi: City of Cultural Heritage Innovation

Zugdidi is an outstanding city, due to its historic and cultural tourism and innovative approaches to preservation, management, and presentation of its cultural heritage. City, where cooperation is encouraged to support the historical heritage and re-conceptualization of the role and functions of historic sites, through discovering hidden histories, and initiating new types of cultural activities.

## Strategic Ambition:

Zugdidi is an outstanding city, due to its historic and cultural tourism and innovative approaches to preservation, management, and presentation of its cultural heritage. City, where cooperation is encouraged to support the historical heritage and re-conceptualization of the role and functions of historic sites, through discovering hidden histories, and initiating new types of cultural activities.

### 3.1.1 Introduction

Zugdidi and Samegrelo Region have many histories; each layered by the distinctive interventions of our ancestors who, in turn, have shaped new senses of identity and place. The heritage of Zugdidi and the region provides for an astonishing array of both tangible (building-based and physical landscapes) and intangible cultural assets (such as festivals, music, writing and memory).

The cultural heritage of Zugdidi, both tangible and intangible, is our common wealth and treasure. This is the inheritance that our past generations preserved for us – a prerequisite for our successful future. Our cultural heritage defines who we are today and who we wish to be in the future.

Cultural heritage is our link to the past, a strong foundation for our present, and a guiding light to the future. It is an irreplaceable source of knowledge and a priceless resource for economic growth, employment, and social unity.

Our heritage enriches and beautifies the daily lives of our citizens, inspires artists, youth, and scientists, and is a driving force behind our cultural and creative industries. Our cultural heritage and the way we preserve, develop and value it, is what will ultimately help us in positioning Zugdidi as a truly European city, one that people are persuaded to visit and enjoy living and working in.

Cultural heritage as a common resource and wealth may be left unprotected due to over-exploitation and insufficient funding, thus, it is our responsibility to take care of our

cultural heritage in a wise, creative and innovative way.

Much of the energy, resources and priorities for culture have focused on the protection and refurbishment of heritage assets. This is vital, however, this focus on protection has, in some instances, limited the focus on heritage innovation – where heritage assets are re-imagined as spaces, platforms or forms for contemporary use; where they can be revitalised for other uses; or, where different narratives can be formed where the future is a departure from the past.

Our ambition highlights the human dimension of heritage and supports a wider understanding of it. From a standpoint of our strategic goal, cultural heritage is a resource for sustainable development and improved quality of life.

This theme focuses on heritage as a resource for contemporary cultural development and innovation. This is where cultural organisations and their audiences and partners play an active role in engaging with the past and nurturing possibilities for the future. This is where new partnerships are developed to conserve and re-purpose heritage through the active production of new types of cultural activity from a changing population. And this is where cultural tourism and the creative industries can help generate new income which can be re-invested into heritage development. To raise awareness of the city's heritage among the community members, especially youth, we strongly believe it's important to develop a new educational program, which

would be focused on highlighting the role and contribution of Zugdidi both in Georgian history and culture. More specifically, this program would be developed and implemented using new technologies, among them being interactive websites, mobile applications, computer games, virtual tours, etc.

In addition, we envisage to initiate programs, that would help increase the level of interest and engagement of young people in the process of our cultural heritage preservation, its re-conception and reinvention with creative and innovative methods. This in turn will be supported by establishing heritage clubs related to specific monuments, which will link local population, schools, and high education institution. Club activities will be oriented both on the study of local history, as well as, voluntary programs, through which younger members will be able to engage in and contribute to the rehabilitation of heritage spaces.

The aforementioned programs will mainly involve the members of Zugdidi University academia and other relevant institutions. Additionally, initiatives will be developed by higher education personnel and school history teachers, to increase the engagement of Zugdidi communities. These will involve remote learning activities, encompassing local history and heritage, delivered using simple and understandable language to increase awareness and strengthen the identity of the community.

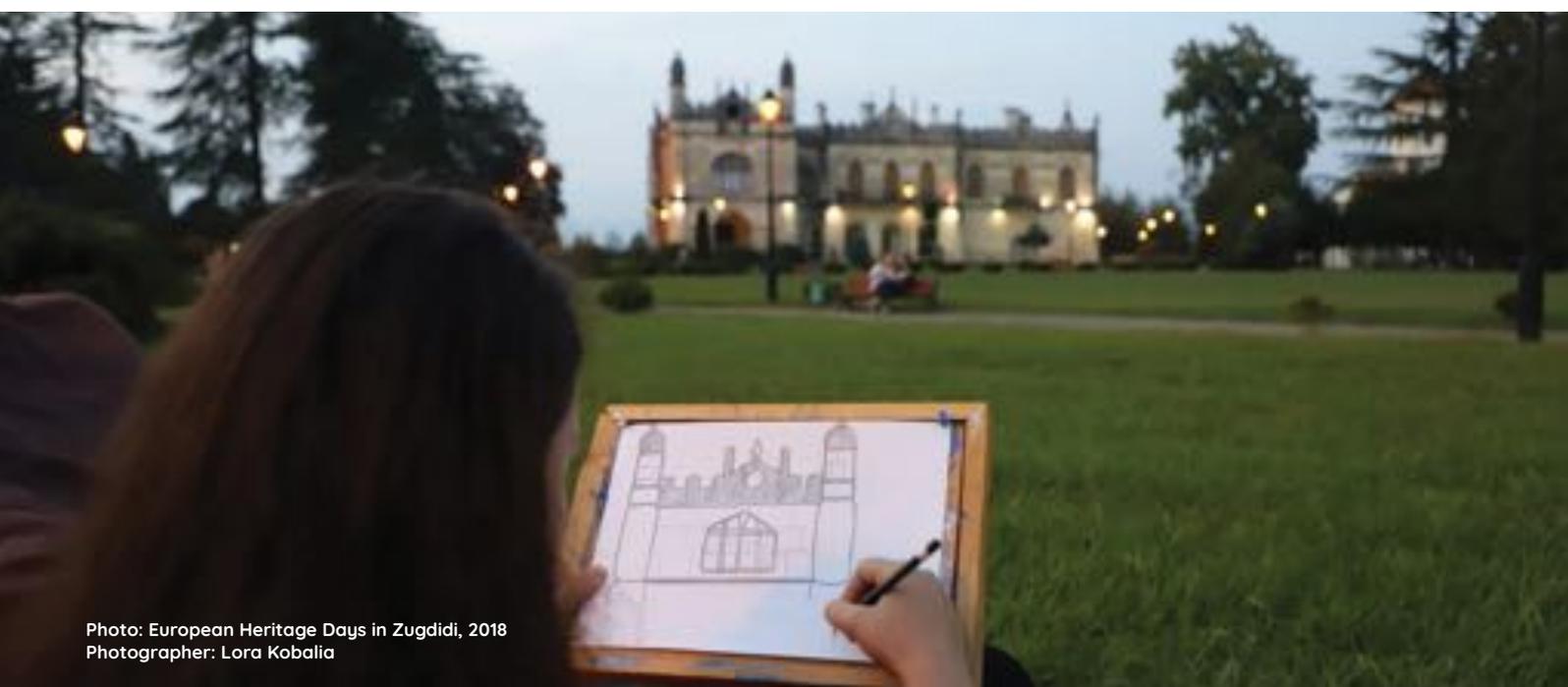
Zugdidi cultural-historical and urban landscape contains local monuments, museums,

artefacts, and elements of intangible heritage (local know-how, practices, traditions, rituals and folklore). Visitors increasingly become parts of this landscape and thus, cultural heritage evolves into a system of knowledge, where legacy, contemporary art, and future values become interwoven.

This is why, the innovative nature of our approach is based upon informing the community about the value and potential of our heritage; increasing its accessibility through education and research; involving younger audiences; using new technologies; and encouraging the engagement of the community in discussions about the development of our heritage.

Thus, the main objective of this ambition is to help the identification, demonstration and involvement of the cultural heritage resources in city's cultural life and cultural touristic routes; Transform these heritage sites and other cultural infrastructure (i.e., museums, libraries, theatres, etc.) into multifunctional creative spaces, to make them more accessible and attractive, thus, enhance their financial stability and further development.

For effective branding and demonstration of the city's and its cultural and touristic products, engagement of local communities is very important. This requires the development of innovation through series of capacity building measures - trainings, entrepreneurship skills enhancement, building partnerships among culture and tourism sectors.



## 3.1.2 Local context

The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS)<sup>4</sup> defined cultural tourism as the travel of people towards cultural places (heritage sites, manifestations of art and culture, pieces of art) in different cities of the world, to obtain new information and experiences and fulfilment of cultural needs.

Zugdidi is a very interesting municipality, in the context of cultural tourism, as its territory contains both historic and cultural monuments and resources, as well as resorts, distinct architecture, museums, characteristic and authentic gastronomy, and diversity of crafts, and other cultural and creative points of interest. The city is very diverse and rich with cultural gastro- and ethno-tourism, as well as ecotourism and religious tourism potential.

In 2022, Zugdidi cultural resources study has determined, that overall, 50 cultural institutions of various types are operating in Zugdidi and while the municipality is rich with cultural heritage resources, at this point, only 10 immovable cultural heritage monuments are enlisted, three of which have been granted a National Monument Category. Within the city 2 immovable cultural heritage monuments are located, with one of them having a National Monument Category. This scarcity of enlisted monuments is explained by improper inventory. Additionally, Zugdidi is distinguished by the amount and significance of its intangible cultural heritage elements. It is also worth noting, that the Dadiani Palace

Historical and Architectural Museum houses up to 55 000 exhibits and artefacts of various types and importance. Furthermore, there are 3 distinct resorts (Tsaishi, Chkaduashi, and Anaklia) in Zugdidi.

Despite its cultural and historic diversity, according to tour operators, the average duration of a tour in the Samegrelo region, including Zugdidi municipality, is quite short. Specifically, 47% of the surveyed operators usually stopped visitors in the region for 1 day, while 31% only pass through. In this case, the point of destination for tourism only serves as a point of rest or a transit route for tourists heading to the Svaneti or Adjara regions. As a result, it's quite challenging to attract investment and accumulate wealth in the region, which in turn is reflected in local economic development as well.

It is also interesting, that across Samegrelo region, there are following categories of tours: the majority of tours are cultural (57%), followed by adventure tours (31%), with gastronomy tours having some relevancy, as well (5%) and the rest being various other types of tours.

As it has already been mentioned, Zugdidi is a city of rich and diverse history and traditions, with a substantial potential for innovative approaches and initiatives for preservation, management, and demonstration of cultural heritage, which could immensely increase the attractiveness of the city.

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<sup>4</sup>The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) <http://www.atlas-euro.org/>



Photo: Place where the Zug-didi has started. Church "Mantsxvarkari" and the landscape.  
Photographer: Levan Gabeshvili

# Challenges

Photo: Cultural Heritage of Zugdidi from Bronze Age to Samegrelo's Samtavro. "Kolkhis Nana" in front of the Dadiani Palace (Nikoseuli).  
Photographer: Elguja Khubutia



### 3.1.3 Challenges

-  Cultural heritage sites and cultural infrastructure in Zugdidi lack multifunctional and/or creative spaces;
-  Touristic places are not branded and equipped with additional functions and services (souvenir shops, cafeteria, etc.);
-  There is a lack of cultural routes within the city and Zugdidi itself is not a member of any international cultural route (e.g., Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe);
-  Modern technologies, such as virtual tours, audio guides, mobile applications, etc. are not used;
-  Low community engagement in the process of cultural preservation, management, and development;
-  Practice of organizing the events (such as festivals, masterclasses, educational activities, etc.) at aforementioned places is quite rare;
-  Tangible cultural resources of Zugdidi are not sufficiently inventoried and enlisted in the National Heritage Registry, therefore are not protected by any legal status, which in turn makes it difficult to properly represent them or ensure their protection;
-  In most cases, the majority of the monuments require detailed inventory, diagnostics, and further conservation/rehabilitation, as well as improvement of their material-technical base;
-  Lack of or damaged tourism infrastructure at the monuments (signs, banners, information boards, WCs, etc.);
-  Low ticket sales, thus little income and higher dependency on state financing;
-  Low local private sector engagement in cultural heritage conservation and development processes;
-  Majority of locations do not correspond the accessibility requirements and are not well adapted for visitors with disabilities.

# ZUGDIDI: CITY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE INNOVATION

Action Plan

1	ACTION: POSITIONING AND PROMOTION OF ZUGDIDI AS A CITY RICH WITH CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL PLACES		
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
1.1	Mapping of Zugdidi cultural heritage (CH) resources, inter alia traditional “Oda” houses and their submission to be enlisted in the National Heritage Registry.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.	2022-2023
1.2	Ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of CH sites, inter alia traditional “Oda” houses, and their integration into cultural and tourist routes, in cooperation with the private owners.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.; Municipal Development Fund of Georgia.	2023-2024
1.3	Promoting local cultural resources and sites using modern technologies (virtual tours, web portals, cultural posters, VR, AR, etc.)	Georgian National Tourism Administration; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; TechPark Zugdidi; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi.	2022-2026
1.4	Digitizing the cultural and historical destinations of Zugdidi and developing of an electronic catalogue.	National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi.	2022-2023
1.5	Developing a mobile app, which would integrate the cultural and historical destinations using VR and AR.	National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; TechPark Zugdidi; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi.	2023
1.6	Organizing the annual cultural heritage festival.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.; Georgian National Tourism Administration; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
1.7	Celebrating the International Museum Day (May 18), European heritage days (September 17-18), as well as “the night at the museum” and International day for monuments and sites (April 18) annually.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.; Dadiani Palaces Historical and Architectural Museum; Union of local museums; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
1.8	Cooperating with bloggers, and arrangement of targeted campaigns and events, to increase Zugdidi’s wider promotion and recognition.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; “Youth Palace” of Zugdidi Municipality; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi.	2023-2026
1.9	Re-conception and re-branding of Dadiani Palace Historical and Architectural Museum and other CH sites to transform them into multifunctional, creative spaces and to make them more accessible.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Georgian National Tourism Administration; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization.	2022-2026
1.10	Establishing the heritage clubs, which will link the local population, schools, and high education institutions, to raise awareness about the protection and maintenance of CH.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Public and private schools of Zugdidi Municipality; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi.	2022-2026
1.11	Supporting the strong cooperation between the cultural and creative sector and Zugdidi botanical garden, using new cultural hubs and spaces, to organize different cultural events.	“Management Centre for Botanical Gardens” of Zugdidi Municipality; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Arts and Culture Development Centre “Youth Palace” of Zugdidi Municipality; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026

1.12	Re-branding and Production of New and Changing of Old Signs, Banners and Information Boards at Cultural and Heritage Sights	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2023
<b>2</b>	<b>ACTION: PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE CH THROUGH INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL AND TOURISTIC PLATFORMS</b>		
<b>N</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
2.1	Preparing nominations of tangible and intangible CH of Zugdidi and Samegrelo Region, to be submitted for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List and on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.	2022-2023
2.2	Promoting the Tsaishi as a historic thermal town and joining the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns (CoE programme Cultural Routes).	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; National Environmental Agency; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization.	2022
2.3	Joining of Zugdidi Botanical Garden to the European Route of Historic Gardens (Cultural Routes of CoE programme)	“Management Centre for Botanical Gardens” of Zugdidi Municipality.	2022
2.4	Evaluating the potential for other cultural destinations, to join the Cultural Routes of CoE programme, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Route of Jewish Heritage;</li> <li>■ European Route of Historic Gardens;</li> <li>■ XX century totalitarian regime architecture;</li> <li>■ European Route of Industrial Heritage.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.; Israeli House; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2023
<b>3</b>	<b>ACTION: EMPOWERMENT OF YOUTH TO ENGAGE THEM WITH HERITAGE AND CREATIVE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>N</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
3.1	Developing new educational programs about Zugdidi culture and heritage, using modern technologies (interactive websites, applications, computer games, virtual tours, etc.)	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi. Public and private schools of Zugdidi Municipality.	2022-2023
3.2	Initiating the young researchers’ program at Local Museums.	National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.; Dadiani Palaces Historical and Architectural Museum; Union of local museums; Management Centre of Zugdidi Municipality Libraries; Public and private schools of Zugdidi Municipality.	2022-2026
3.3	Initiating the children’s archaeology programme.	National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi. Public and private schools of Zugdidi Municipality.	2022-2026
3.4	Developing the particular educational programmes for the preservation and promotion of the Megrelian language.	National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Public and private schools of Zugdidi Municipality.	2022-2026

# Zugdidi: Creative City of Arts and Crafts

Zugdidi is a creative city of arts and crafts, where ancient authentic traditions, creative approaches of the local community and their innovation serve as the foundation for the development of the city, contribute to its attractiveness and the economic strength of its population.

## Strategic Ambition:

Zugdidi is a creative city of arts and crafts, where ancient authentic traditions, creative approaches of the local community and their innovation serve as the foundation for the development of the city, contribute to its attractiveness and the economic strength of its population.

### 3.2.1 Introduction

Traditional craftsmanship stands out among other cultural industries as a separate field and in parallel with other sectors such as music, cinema, architecture, fashion, etc. is a significant source of employment and economic growth.

In 2003 UNESCO adopted “The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage”, which significantly altered any previous understandings of cultural heritage and enhanced it from monuments and collections to include intangible heritage as well.

According to the convention, oral traditions were recognized as intangible cultural heritage, among them – language, as a mean of transferring intangible cultural heritage, as well as, performing arts, community practices, rituals, holidays, traditional games, culinary, local knowledge, and practices having universal value, along with traditional craftsmanship, the livelihood of which heavily relies on knowledge and skills.

Traditional craftsmanship is the most tangible among the types of intangible heritage, as it produces material goods. However, as far as handicrafts and crafts are associated with the skills and knowledge transferred from generation to generation via oral tradition, the convention specifically covers the aforementioned intangible expertise and skills instead of any particular piece of craft. Thus, the goal of the convention and our strategy is not to protect any specific piece of craft, but rather to preserve the tradition, ensure its passage



**“Zugdidi is a place where culture is valued, protected and nurtured. Culture is woven through everyday life, shapes and is shaped by society, and its transformative potential is experienced by everyone. Zugdidi’s rich cultural heritage and creativity of today is inspired by people and place, enlivens every community and is acknowledged and celebrated around the world.”**

down the generational line, and aid in full utilization of its potential, for local social and economic development.

Traditional craft implies a creative or imitative process, which produces a solely handmade or partially mechanically assembled product, based on both tangible cultural heritage motives, as well as intangible cultural heritage and folk handcrafting traditions.

A product of traditional handicraft implies a product created using a traditional technique and/or design, i.e., traditional shapes, using ornamental motives, which heavily rely on manual/hand work.

As for handmade items of contemporary design, created using non-traditional technologies or ones with traditional design, but created only via mechanical means (mass-produced souvenirs, etc.), they belong to the category of folk handicraft and/or crafts.

## 3.2.2 Local context

For centuries, Zugdidi has been a centre for craftsmanship, due to its richness of natural resources. As a region neighbouring the Black Sea and Svaneti mountainous regions, Samegrelo has always been at the crossroads of foreign and local cultures, something that is easily noticeable in contemporary art. Over time, local craftsmanship was developed by the newer generations.

The emergence and development of traditional crafts businesses within the region have been especially noticeable within the past 10-15 years, due to the intervention of international organizations in this sector. Crafts businesses received assistance in terms of long-term assets, as well as capacity building. Despite this, we are yet to see desirable results in product design, in comparison with what the market demands. Multi-profile surveys of the field need to be conducted, to identify the challenges to the process of development.

Traditional crafts and applied arts have always been integral parts of Georgian households. It served both as clothing, tools, and other household-related items, as well as a trade item.

Development of factories and industrialization slowly replaced crafted products, but traditional crafts still have a major role.

Artisans in various fields of craftsmanship and applied arts can rarely be found in Zugdidi nowadays. Naturally, along with other fields of art, some specific techniques based on local specificities were used in Zugdidi, part of which are sadly lost in time, but luckily some survived to this day, although under constant risk of being forgotten. Zugdidi houses some of the most popular fields: metallurgy, woodworking, textile, and ceramics. Zugdidi municipality has special potential for developing woodcarving, woodworking, and ceramic workshops, keeping in mind local resources, raw materials, and traditions.

This field has massive potential, as a cultural asset and a huge role to play in economic and social development. It is an important resource for employment and creating new education possibilities and jobs for younger generations, which would serve as a platform for social integration and regional development.

It is worth noting, that support for the development of entrepreneurial activities among youth, has been considered in the 2019-2022 Youth Development Strategy of Zugdidi action plan, which highlights the rising demand for development in this direction and sets a precedent for the establishment of a multi-faceted management model.



Photo: Ceramic workshop "ORKOL Studio"  
Photographer: Nukri Berulava

### 3.2.3 Challenges



Photo: Robert Absnadze, ceramic artist.  
Photographer: Elguja Khubutia

-  **L**ack of actions to promote and position Zugdidi as a city of traditional crafts and folk arts;
-  **L**ocal artisans do not get sufficient assistance, for example, by supporting their participation in local and international exhibitions and markets;
-  **L**ocal artisans and their products are not adequately presented on the internet (on a special website) or any printed materials (artisans' catalogues);
-  **L**ocal artisans and artists do not have sufficient knowledge, experience, and skills – they require technical, legal, and financial assistance;
-  **D**espite Georgia joining the “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” in 2007, within which the state has recognized the need to preserve the intangible heritage and has accepted the responsibilities of the convention, there is no law, that would safeguard intangible cultural heritage;

-  **T**raditional craftsmanship is not regulated by the Georgian legislation, thus it is not a part of any specific regulation area. Its exact definition, and characteristics, are not presented in the Georgian Legislation. Despite this, in the law of Georgia “On Culture”, we see “Folk handicraft and craftsmanship”, as a part of the “cultural field”, while “folk handicraft” is not defined at all - there are no mentions of its characteristics.
-  **P**roduced crafts can’t compete with mass-made inexpensive items produced in factories, which in turn increases the risk of losing traditions in Zugdidi and the region;
-  **A**nother challenge, that traditional crafts face both locally and on a global level, is environmental conservation issues, that have imposed limits on use of some natural resources and raw materials;
-  **M**ajority of products in Zugdidi traditional handicraft market are constantly facing the lack of innovation and corresponding to the modern requirements. There is no working mechanism for quality control, which causes major fluctuation in quality levels. The product, for the most part, is intended for tourists, which limits the customer categories and leads to the seasonal nature of sales;
-  **A** large part of products has no appropriate retail packaging or accompanying information, relevant to international standards;
-  **N**o less important is the subject of demonstration and exposition, which is an important prerequisite for marketing. This aspect is disregarded not only by the single artisans, but in most cases by the shops and especially the souvenir salons;
-  **L**imited sales channels and lack of a distribution network, which significantly limits the circulation of products. There is no single targeted export program for crafts products;
-  **A**nother important problem is the lack of cooperation between artisans, other professional circles, and higher education institutions, which is in turn, caused by uncoordinated actions of educational and cultural circles. There is no practice of employing artisans within schools and no traditional handicraft guidelines in the national education plan;
-  **M**ajority of workshops need infrastructural assistance - renewal of appliances and provision with public creative spaces;
-  **D**espite private initiatives, examples of cooperation between handicraft organizations and individual artisans are very rare. There are no unions or associations, that would coordinate these initiatives and lobby the interests of this sector.

# ZUGDIDI: CREATIVE CITY OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

1 ACTION: POSITIONING AND PROMOTION OF ZUGDIDI AS A CREATIVE CITY OF ARTS AND CRAFTS			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
1.1	Joining the leading international networks of traditional crafts (UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art; World Crafts Council, etc.).	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2024-2026
1.2	Participating in important competitions in the crafts field, such as Award of Excellence for Handicrafts – WCC, Europa Nostra, Crafting Europe, etc.	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
1.3	Developing a thematic cultural route and joining the European Route of Ceramics.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Association of Georgian Traditional Handicraft.	2022-2023
1.4	Establishing a targeted internet brand platform.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian National Tourism Administration.	2022-2023
1.5	Creating the new possibilities for cooperation and partnership with other Creative Craft Cities.	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
2 ACTION: PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF ZUGDIDI AND SAMEGRELO REGION INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
2.1	Mapping of intangible cultural heritage, inter alia Megrelian mythology, traditional practices, for further preservation and promotion.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2023
2.2	Preparing nominations and submitting to be enlisted in the National Registry of Intangible Cultural Heritage.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; NLPE National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2023
2.3	Identifying of local intangible cultural heritage elements in danger and taking appropriate measures for their protection.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.	2022-2023
2.4	Initiating and developing local cultural and thematic touristic and cultural routes, inter alia local medical (folk and homeopathic medicine), religious tourism, etc.	Georgian Tourism Association; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization.	2022-2023
2.5	Promoting and supporting the usage of ornaments of Megrelian traditional Oda in local architecture.	National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Association of Georgian Traditional Handicraft.	2022-2026

<b>3 ACTION: RAISE THE RECOGNITION OF LOCAL ARTISTS AND ARTISANS</b>			
<b>N</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
3.1	Initiating the mobility programme to support the artisans' participation in the international expos and markets (Messe Frankfurt, Fiera Milano, Santa Fe Folk, Art Festival, etc.).	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
3.2	Organizing the local and international exchange programmes and summer camps.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association;	2023-2026
3.3	Promoting local artists and artisans and their work through exhibitions, festivals, TV-shows, articles in media, and social networks.	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
3.4	Celebrating and promoting the European Artistic Crafts Days, as well as promoting local artists' engagement and popularization of their art.	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
3.5	Organizing annual festivals: traditional crafts market; festivals of Modern art, theatre, and musical festival.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Shalva Dadiani State Professional Drama Theater; Arts and Culture Development Centre; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
<b>4 ACTION: STRENGTHEN LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SUPPORT CAPACITY BUILDING IN SMES</b>			
<b>N</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
4.1	Implementing capacity building activities for individual artists and artisans as well as organizations in the following directions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Business planning and management;</li> <li>■ Requirements of the modern market;</li> <li>■ Design trends;</li> <li>■ Pricing factors;</li> <li>■ Product presentation;</li> <li>■ Participation in expos;</li> <li>■ Branding and marketing;</li> <li>■ Fundraising.</li> </ul>	Danish Refugee Council; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
4.2	Initiating grant program to promote entrepreneurship.	Danish Refugee Council; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
4.3	Establishing local cultural products retail points nearby popular tourist destinations (Dadiani palace, museum, restaurant, tourist information centre, etc.).	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Georgian National Tourism Administration; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026

5 ACTION: SUPPORT THE DIVERSIFICATION OF LOCAL TOURISM-RELATED PRODUCTION			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
5.1	Supporting the creation and promotion of local souvenirs.	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
5.2	Active cooperation with the private sector in order to bring craft products for promotion and sale in their spaces.	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
5.3	Regularly conducting the statistics and the surveys on crafts, to assess the dynamics and define the local and international niche markets.	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi.	2022-2026
6 ACTION: PROMOTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAMS, DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND IMPROVEMENT OF COMPETENCES IN CREATIVE BUSINESSES			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
6.1	Empowering youth while supporting the following educational instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ School programmes;</li> <li>■ Competitions;</li> <li>■ Exchange programmes;</li> <li>■ Festivals.</li> </ul>	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; Vocational Skills Agency; Danish Refugee Council; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Public and private schools of the municipality.	2022-2026
6.2	Supporting formal and informal education by integrating decorative applicative art and traditional crafts studies into school programs.	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; Vocational Skills Agency; Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Public and private schools in the municipality.	2022-2026
6.3	Integration of the following directions into the higher educational programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Creative/cultural industries;</li> <li>■ Intangible cultural heritage;</li> <li>■ Culture for economic growth.</li> </ul>	Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University; Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; Vocational Skills Agency; Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association	2022-2026
7 ACTION: ENCOURAGEMENT OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COOPERATION, ESTABLISHMENT OF SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS AND UNIONS			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
7.1	Supporting the establishment of cooperation within and outside of sectors, networks, professional unions and associations.	Danish Refugee Council; USAID; UNDP; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026

# Zugdidi: Creative City of Gastronomy

Photo: "Continuator of Traditions". Little Megrelian girls at the Workshop of Megrelian spices.  
Photographer: Irakli Gamsakhurdia

Established close cooperation between local artists and representatives of the gastronomy sector, for the common goal - Zugdidi is famous on national and international level, as a city of gastronomic innovations, where culture and creativity support the development of local gastronomy and in turn, strengthening local communities.

## Strategic Ambition:

Established close cooperation between local artists and representatives of the gastronomy sector, for the common goal – Zugdidi is famous on national and international level, as a city of gastronomic innovations, where culture and creativity support the development of local gastronomy and in turn, strengthening local communities.

### 3.3.1 Introduction

Gastronomy is becoming more popular, attractive, and marketable sectors in the modern world. It has become an integral part of culture, same as museums, theatres, visual arts, etc., yet it is still not identified as a part of the culture in Georgia. Unfortunately, even in the “Cultural Strategy 2025”, we don’t see the gastronomical sector identified as one of the sectors of cultural industries and cultural tourism or as an important source for promoting regional cultural potential.

Food and culture are interwoven. The processes involved in preparing, serving and sharing certain foods and drinks might appear simple, but they often carry important social and cultural significance. Recipes and dietary practices can be used to transmit knowledge from one generation to the next.

Gastronomy, the selection, preparation, presentation and participation with culinary and gastronomic aspects of food, falls squarely into this category of ‘fine art activity’ since most societies seek to differentiate their food preparation into either the purely utilitarian or the highly developed and stylised methods of presentation and participation which, in many instances, are not designed for consumption merely, but also for status, ritualistic and aesthetic purposes.

Cooking and tasting certain dishes strengthen social bonds, while for tourists, sampling local products, authentic dishes, and culinary traditions is a great way of deepening their knowledge and experience.

It should be noted, that as of January 2022, UNESCO recognises 25 food and drink-related traditions as part of its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Gastronomy can offer significant support towards the development of social economy and has a distinct potential, in terms of gastro-tourism, gastro-politics, and gastro-diplomacy.

Gastronomy is science, art, culture of eating, and overall – an interdisciplinary direction, with interlaced psycho-chemical, cultural and socioeconomic processes. Gastro-tourists want to gain in-depth knowledge on why some foods are eaten, in what shape or form, what is the history of a product or a dish, how it is cooked, and what role does it play in the history, culture, and everyday life of a country. Thus, gastronomy can be considered as a “science, that studies the culture of eating”.

It should also be noted, that the goal of gastro-tourism may go beyond food consumption, to finding out its role in the history, geography, and ethnic culture of a nation, region, or a sub-culture, along with discovering unique recipes and authentic tastes, specific gastronomical brands, and traditional cooking methods. Gastro-tourism implies the study and discovery of a specific culture’s history of food and feast. According to the experts of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), gastro-tourism makes up 30% of tourist routes over the globe, due to gastronomy being a quite competitive advantage. A city can use its food tourism industry as an economic booster, to address socio-economic challenges.



**“Culture should be free to challenge and inspire, enjoy independence and enable self-expression. Nurturing culture and enabling it to flourish is an essential and powerful part of the fabric of any society.”**

Additionally, gastronomy consists of ethical and sustainable values, which stem from local products, culture, way of life, and landscape. Gastronomy has become an irreplaceable way to become familiar with a city’s culture and way of life, as it represents all traditional values, related to all new trends in tourism: respect towards culture and tradition, healthy lifestyle, authenticity, sustainability, etc.

Our goal is to transform Zugdidi into a leading creative city renowned for its year-round high-quality gastro-tourism, cultural and natural heritage, service, and an ancient tradition of hospitality.

When we envision future of Zugdidi, we see a city, with popular authentic gastronomic culture and creative approaches, where Megrelian gastronomic culture is being exported and Samegrelo is renowned, as a place of gastronomical destination and that is an important and distinct part of Georgian gastronomic culture, with gastro-tourism being an important contributor towards the GDP of Zugdidi.



Photo: Gebjalia, masterpiece of Megrelian traditional Puroba. Ethno Village "Sisafura"

## 3.3.2

### Local context

Local cuisine is an important part of intangible cultural heritage of Zugdidi. Ingredients of Megrelian dishes, methods of food preparation and its storage, as well as the means of production, clearly represent the culture and rich past of city and the region.

Zugdidi displays a gastronomic festival of flavor for adventurous eaters. The various foods on offer reflect the region's natural elements, its people and its history. The cuisine of this region is renowned across Georgia for its spicy and robust flavors and its ample use of Sulguni - perhaps Georgia's most famous cheese. Many of the region's finest dishes have found a home on tables across Georgia, thereby contributing significantly to the development of Georgia's national cuisine, supporting sustainable tourism development in the region and contribute to the continuing celebration of Georgia's gastronomic heritage, both in Georgia and abroad.

Zugdidi and Samegrelo have historically had very distinct places in the history of Georgian grape and wine cultures. This is due to the natural environment (soil, agro-climatic characteristics, biodiversity of grapevine), as well as the abundance of vineyards and scales of production. It is known, that in the middle of the 19th century, Samegrelo was one of the leading regions by the area of its vineyards and wine production.

It should also be noted, that there are many hybrid varieties of grapevine in Samegrelo, that have substituted endemic varieties back in the day, due to the low care requirements. Megrelian grapevine varieties are now cultivated in Martvili and Mukhuri, so it is still possible to bring endemic varieties back to Zugdidi as well. According to Ermile Nakashidze's book, there are 40 endemic varieties of Megrelian grapevine, among them the most popular - the Ojaleshi variety, which ferments into the finest wine. It is a semi-sweet red wine, with a faint aroma of wild roses and a crimson red colour.

Many renowned ethnographers have mentioned the quality and value of Megrelian

wines in their writings. French traveller Jean Chardin in the seventies of the 17th century considered Megrelian wine to have been the best in all of Asia. French consul to Tbilisi, Jean Francois Gamba has also mentioned Megrelian wine as "the best", when recalling his travels to Georgia in 1820. Swiss historian, Frederic Dubois de Montpereux claimed, that the best wine on the southern sides of the Caucasus mountains, was made in Samegrelo.

As time changes, the listing of traditional dishes of the country change, sometimes disappear of ingredients adjust from old to new. Zugdidi is the area where traditions are deeply rooted and the locals still retain their ancestors' knowledge and prepare authentic dishes using traditional recipes that are of equal interest and demand to both local and foreign tourists.

Despite changing times and evolving traditions, the historical rules of hospitality by Georgians have endured for centuries, and authentic cuisine is still maintained. As a result, the city has become a diverse environment, combining eastern and western culture. With a unique combination of traditional dishes and European influence, contemporary cuisine in Zugdidi uses new culinary techniques to create a complex and characteristic fusion of flavours that distinguishes its culinary style.

Gastronomy is a significant part of everyday life in Zugdidi, and special dishes are often centre points in key events including weddings and religious ceremonies. Zugdidi has been the centre of spice trade for centuries. With its mild climate, the region encompasses an extremely rich flora, allowing for the growth of medicinal and aromatic plants. Women are at the centre of the culinary creative process.



Photo: Ox cart  
Photographer: Elguja Khubutia

In recent years the city's primary concern has been on the establishment of public spaces, such as open-air dining areas and marketplaces. Focusing on promoting culinary advancement within the region, the gastronomic sector is now regarded as the main cultural industry, providing employment opportunities and reducing poverty for local inhabitants. With potential increased support, Zugdidi's culinary sector hopes to grow, not just on a national, but an international scale, by participating in international markets and food festivals, as well as hosting a number of gastronomic events, showcasing local dishes and traditional skills.

Zugdidi Municipality will organise, along with private sector, associations and NGOs, gastronomy themed conceptual festivals and events to promote the diverse local food culture and agriculture. Considering gastronomy as a tool for social inclusion, the city undertakes responsibility to initiate and support new initiatives aiming to promote the sustainability of local food culture, create opportunities for exchange with international stakeholders, enhance the working conditions within the sector, and nurture interest in the sector through education and training programmes targeting young people in particular.

The city will use food tourism industry as economic driver for addressing the social-economic development challenges being currently faced.

Specific activities, conducted within important religious and civil holidays also contain significant gastronomic and culinary components. However, for strategic purposes, it should be noted that the methods and approaches used so far in this direction require systematization and refinement in order to present and popularize Megrelian cuisine and gastronomy at a conceptual level.

### 3.3.3 Challenges

-  Georgian, more specifically – Megrelian gastronomic culture is still an unexplored field, as well as an impact of culture and arts on its presentation and development is underdeveloped;
-  Nowadays, Zugdidi is not being positioned as a gastronomic city and it is not presented on important international gastronomic platforms, networks and organizations. Zugdidi does not actively participate in relevant contests and campaigns;
-  There is no consolidated internet platform or website, dedicated to the popularization of Zugdidi as a gastronomic city;
-  Zugdidi is not included in any thematic cultural routes, neither on local or international levels;
-  Low activity towards demonstration, preservation, and popularization of Zugdidi and Samegrelo gastronomic intangible cultural heritage and traditions;
-  Megrelian culinary recipe books, qualified gastronomic culture researchers, and historians, critics, or advisors are a rarity;
-  Gastronomy and culinary educational programs are not available at any educational level, that makes it hard to receive critically important knowledge and acquire appropriate skills;
-  Prominent places in Zugdidi municipality, which would be of interest for agro-tourism, are not sufficiently explored. They do not receive adequate support, branding, or popularity. Putting Zugdidi on the gastronomic map and giving it a correct positioning is a task that is a great investment of manpower, as the world today learns of countries specifically through their recipes and dishes. This is where Zugdidi has a lot of potential;
-  Low level of cooperation between cultural and gastronomy sectors, an insufficient number of joint projects implemented;
-  There are no gastronomy museums or exhibition areas in Zugdidi or the entire region;
-  Gastronomy festivals are not organized on a regular basis. Lack of practice of organizing combined festivals (gastronomy + local crafts fair + artistic performance, exhibition, etc.);
-  Lack of cooperation and experience-sharing with other world creative cities of gastronomy.
-  Lack of scientific and educational events, exchange programs, conferences, etc;
-  No stakeholders' platforms, sectoral umbrella organizations, associations, etc. in Zugdidi. Little cooperation inside or outside of the sector;
-  Underdeveloped market for gastronomic souvenirs

# ZUGDIDI: CREATIVE CITY OF GASTRONOMY

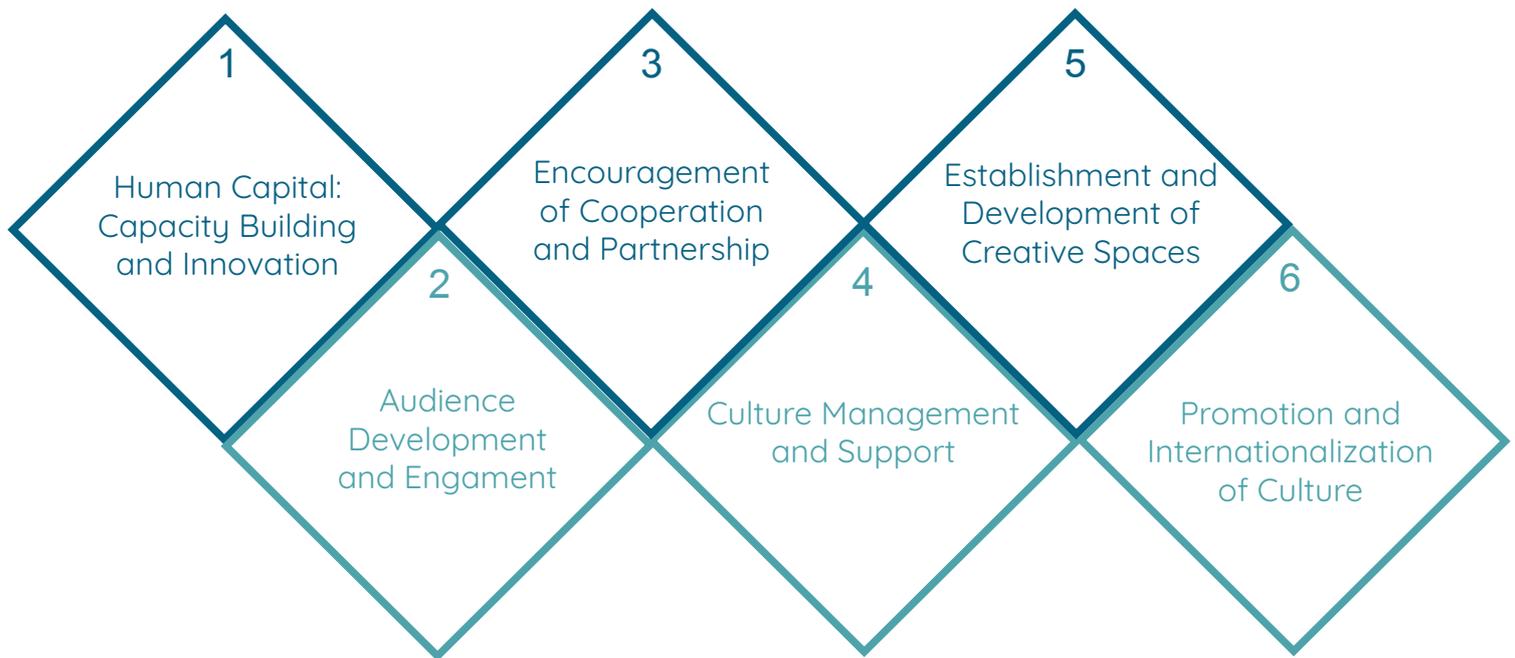
<b>1 ACTION: POSITIONING AND PROMOTION OF ZUGDIDI AS A CITY OF GASTRONOMY BY JOINING THE INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL AND TOURISTIC PLATFORMS</b>			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
1.1	Preparing the nomination and its submission to be recognized as the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
1.2	Joining the network of the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism - IGCAT.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2023
1.3	Nominating Zugdidi for the European Region of Gastronomy Award in 2026.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; Municipalities of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
1.4	Allocating the annual budget to support participation in various thematic international competitions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gastronomy Tourism Start-up Competition of UNWTO;</li> <li>■ IGCAT European Young Chef Award.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
<b>2 ACTION: INCLUSION OF ZUGDIDI IN LOCAL CULTURAL ROUTES AND JOIN TO THE CULTURAL ROUTES OF COE PROGRAMME</b>			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
2.1	Joining to Cultural Routes of CoE programme (European wine route - Iter Vitis, etc.).	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian National Tourism Administration; National Wine Agency of Georgia.	2022-2023
<b>3 ACTION: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF GASTRONOMY, INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TRADITIONS OF ZUGDIDI AND SAMEGRELO REGION</b>			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
3.1	Preparing nominations related to gastronomy and submission to be enlisted in the National Registry of Intangible Cultural Heritage.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization.	2022-2023
<b>4 ACTION: STRENGTHEN CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS BY IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE AND INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS ON GASTRONOMY, CULINARY AND CULTURAL EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION</b>			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
4.1	Developing new educational programmes on Megrelian gastronomy and culinary, using modern technologies, to be introduced at schools.	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; Rural Development Agency; National Food agency; State Laboratory of Agriculture of Georgia; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi. Public and private schools in the municipality.	2022-2026

4.2	Establishing of Zugdidi Gastronomy Academy, to ensure transfer of knowledge, creation of new partnership possibilities and certification programs for chefs and professionals, and to explore creative talents in the gastronomic sector.	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; Vocational Skills Agency; Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; Rural Development Agency; National Food agency; State Laboratory of Agriculture of Georgia; Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.)	2023
5	<b>ACTION: IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF TOURISM RESOURCES OF ZUGDIDI MUNICIPALITY FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF GASTRO-TOURISM</b>		
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
5.1	Developing the internet portal and social page for Zugdidi gastronomy and cultural tourism.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia.	2022-2023
5.2	Preparing and publishing of the book “Taste of Samegrelo”, which will contain both the recipes and cultural history of dishes.	Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Management Centre of Zugdidi Municipality Libraries; Dadiani Palaces Historical and Architectural Museum.	2023
5.3	Establishing a Zugdidi gastronomy database, to define Megrelian cuisine standards, raise awareness, as well as to preserve and support the culture and culinary identity of the Zugdidi and the region.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; National Food agency; State Laboratory of Agriculture of Georgia; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Zugdidi City Hall; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization.	2023
6	<b>ACTION: IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS CULTURAL AND GASTRONOMIC EVENTS</b>		
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
6.1	<p>Organizing annual local and international conceptual festivals, to create synergy between music, arts, crafts, and gastronomy, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Zugdidi culinary expo;</li> <li>■ Street food days;</li> <li>■ Festival of gastro-discoveries;</li> <li>■ Khachapuri festival;</li> <li>■ Ajika festival;</li> <li>■ Wine festival;</li> <li>■ Abkhazian festival;</li> <li>■ Ghomi festival;</li> <li>■ Cheese festival;</li> <li>■ Honey festival.</li> </ul>	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Georgian National Tourism Administration; Shalva Dadiani State Professional Drama Theater; Dadiani Palaces Historical and Architectural Museum; “Management Centre for Botanical Gardens” of Zugdidi Municipality; Arts and Culture Development Centre; “Youth Palace” of Zugdidi Municipality; Zugdidi municipality “Art School Association”; Management Centre of Zugdidi Municipality Libraries; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026

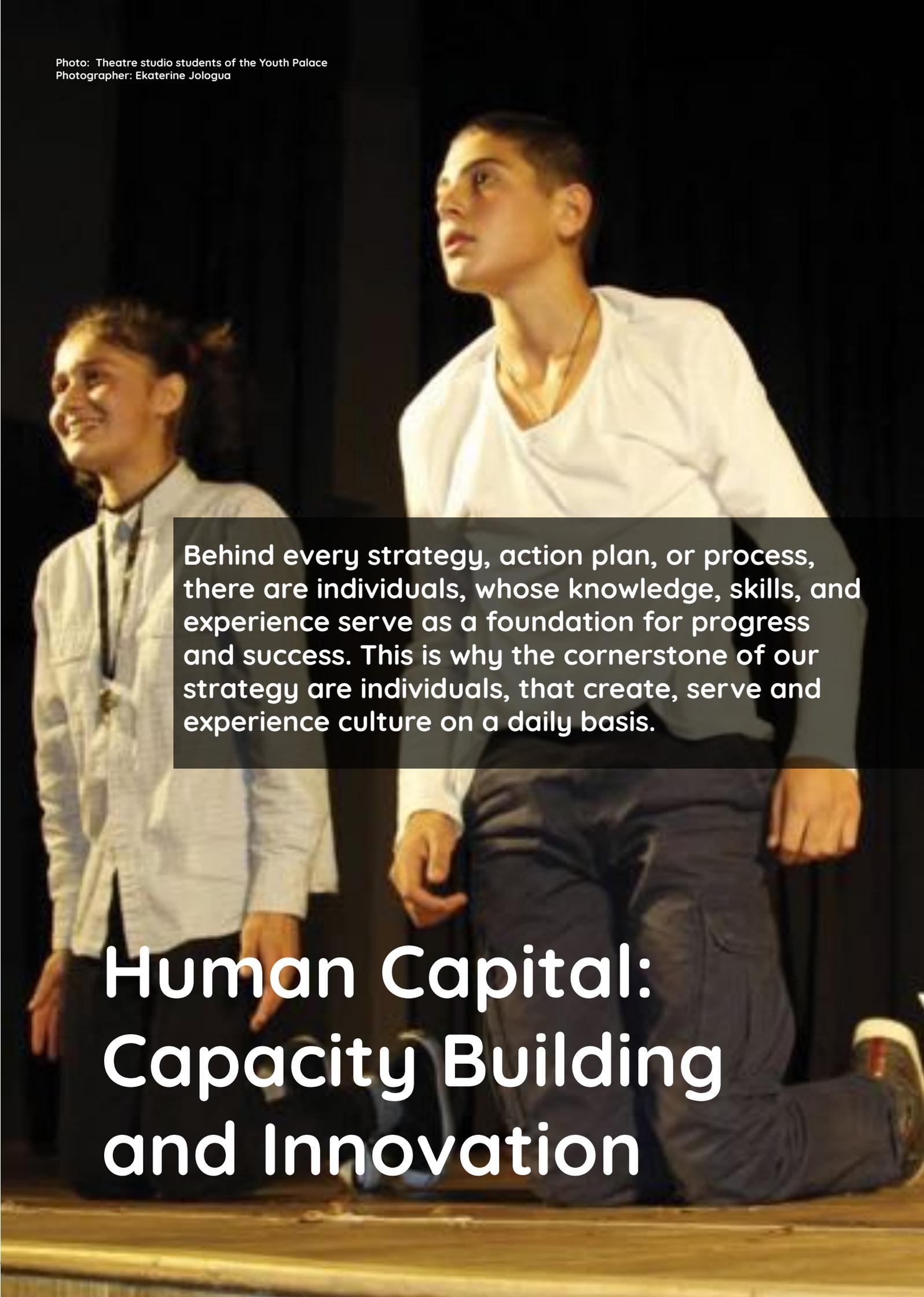
6.2	Organizing folk gastronomy related traditional agricultural events, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Nut harvesting;</li> <li>■ Corn harvesting;</li> <li>■ Tangerine harvesting;</li> <li>■ Megrelian Rtveli.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; Rural Development Agency; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Non-governmental, private, and international organizations and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
7	<b>ACTION: PROMOTING THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE COOPERATION, SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS AND THE CREATION OF UNIONS, WHILE STIMULATING CREATIVITY AND GASTRONOMIC INNOVATIONS</b>		
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
7.1	Establishing new creative spaces through public-private cooperation and community engagement (i.e., Zugdidi Gastronomy Museum, Gastro-taverns, ethno-houses, etc.).	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Municipal Development Fund of Georgia; Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
7.2	Strengthening international cooperation and sustainable development through implementation of innovative projects, inter alia establishment of traditional international gastronomy forums and competitions.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; TechPark Zugdidi; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.).	2023-2026
7.3	Developing the gastro-souvenir market.	Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Association of Georgian Traditional Handicraft; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
7.4	Stimulating the ethno-gastronomy, gastronomic creativity, and innovation, by active cooperation with the culture and arts sector.	Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026

## 3.4 Transversal Priorities

With an objective to achieve tangible results derived from the vision of Zugdidi CDS and taking into account the findings of various researches, surveys, and public consultations, 6 transversal priorities were outlined along the main strategic ambitions. These transversal priorities are relevant to all themes and are oriented towards an effective management of culture and creative industries, establishing an enabling environment and development of necessary skills:



Deriving from strategic objectives, the following goals and actions were defined:

A photograph of two young people in a dark setting. On the left, a young woman with dark hair tied back is smiling and looking upwards. On the right, a young man is kneeling on one knee, looking upwards with a focused expression. Both are wearing light-colored shirts. The background is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting their faces and clothing.

Behind every strategy, action plan, or process, there are individuals, whose knowledge, skills, and experience serve as a foundation for progress and success. This is why the cornerstone of our strategy are individuals, that create, serve and experience culture on a daily basis.

# Human Capital: Capacity Building and Innovation

## 3.4.1

# Human Capital: Capacity Building and Innovation

Behind every strategy, action plan, or process, there are individuals, whose knowledge, skills, and experience serve as a foundation for progress and success. This is why the cornerstone of our strategy are individuals, that create, serve and experience culture on a daily basis.

For the consistent creative evolution of a city, it is important to advance the knowledge and skills of those involved in cultural sectors, both public and private, which will in turn help assist and finance the creation of new possibilities. For this purpose, we plan to initiate a **program to support artists, culture professionals and cultural managers**, which will be oriented towards the initiation of projects and grant competitions, which will support trainings, masterclasses, exchange programs, contests, and mobility as well as their **English language skills** – thus enabling them to access international funding schemes.

We envisage to launch **Learning Labs Program (LLABS)** in public secondary schools of Zugdidi. Learning Labs Program will enable students to enlarge their **creative and transversal skills through project-based work** and to get a first-hand impression on **different types of work the CCS provides**. The program aims to test innovative methods of integrating those skills in formal education. Further, LLABS aim to draw attention to and create **awareness about the importance of Intellectual Property (IP) in the context of creative works** and the respect of others' IP. Why do creations need to be protected and what is the process of IP protection? Finally, the program will **strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation between the CCS and Education**, stimulating long term collaboration to the benefit of both parties and making use of existing synergies.

We plan to launch an **open call for cultural and creative sector organizations and structures** interested in **establishing cooperation projects with schools and university**, introducing students to creative professions and building ties with their local community.

As part of the initiative, students will explore creative and transversal skills through a co-creation project, while also discussing and learning about related topics such as the importance of protecting and respecting intellectual property and creations.

To fully comprehend the potential of culture and creativity and stimulate them, as well as nurture local talents and create possibilities for their growth through an enabling environment, it is of utmost importance to position culture and creativity, as well as entrepreneurial education as integral parts of the education system. This will contribute to the development of creative skills and creative thinking on one hand and the habit of culture and creativity consumption from earlier ages, on the other hand. For this purpose, we envisage to incorporate creative entrepreneurship education in academic curricular of Zugdidi University, through the initiation of interdisciplinary programs.

Creativity and transversal skills play a crucial role for the future job market and job profiles, nevertheless, the inclusion of these aspects into skills development approaches is still incomplete. Development of creative entrepreneurship and leadership skills among students and younger audiences is of utmost importance, which is why we plan to establish a **Creative Incubator at Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University**, which will focus on nurturing and supporting students' creativity and innovation.

Our goal is to engage students in **STEAM disciplines** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) and to develop inclusive and interactive methods and platforms of learning as there is an increasing recognition

that we need healthy, happy people and that CCIs contribute to this. This is leading to an educational focus on STEAM that expands on a less creative educational focus on STEM – science, technology and math.

**A Creative Incubator** will support direct and active cooperation of students with the private sector – though the development of new business models and approaches. We believe that coordinated cooperation with the private sector and the growing engagement of young audiences in this process will support the promotion of creative thinking and innovative approaches.

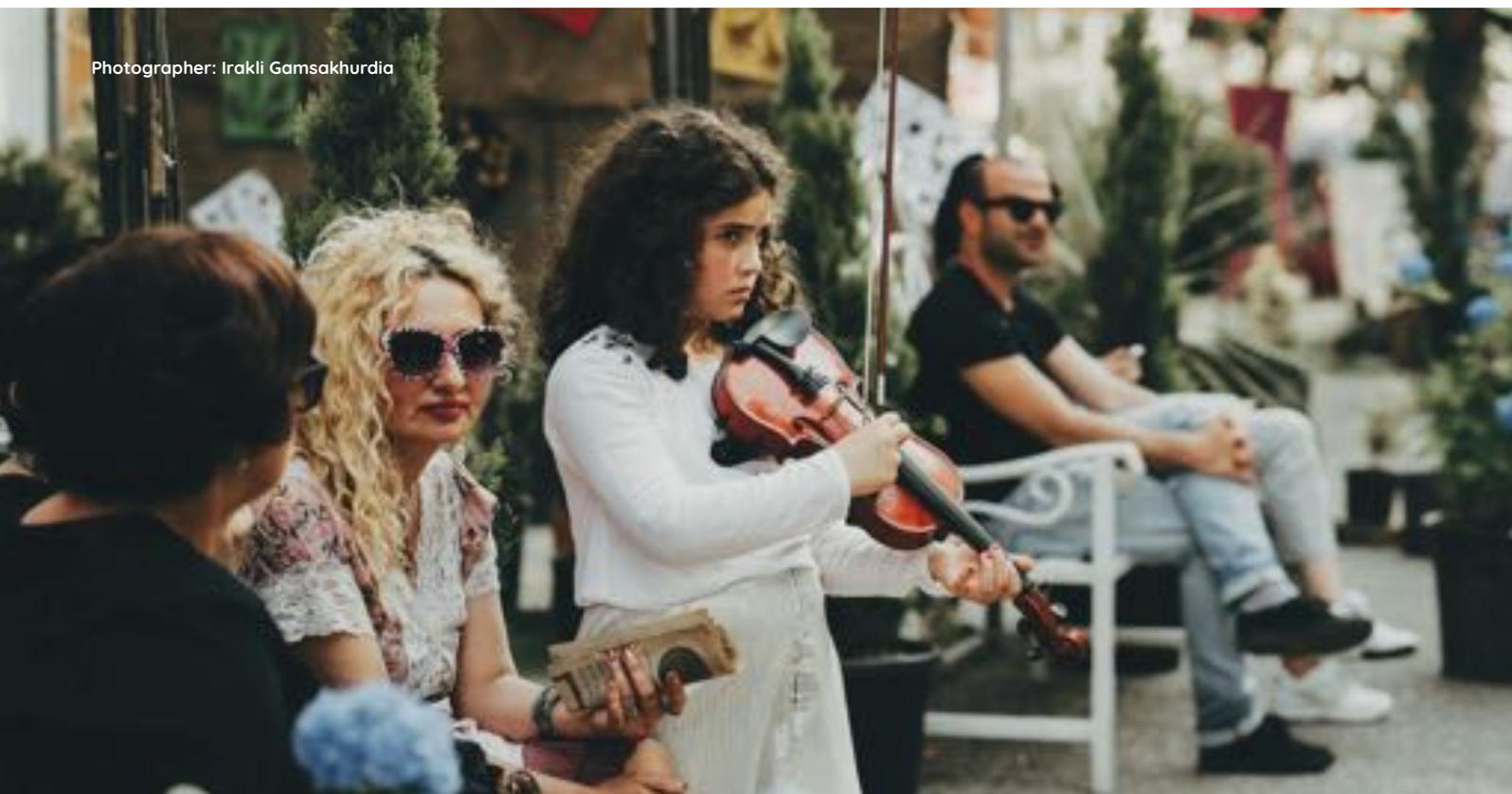
To develop, support, and finance student projects, we foresee to establish a **Students Grant Fund**, which will identify and finance student/youth projects oriented towards finding solutions to local needs, challenges and problems, using innovative and creative approaches.

It is equally important to popularize and support the practice of **lifelong professional learning for adults**, in order to improve the competencies and skills of small and medium size entrepreneurs and start-ups and help them become sustainable, start new careers and deliver high-quality products and services. With this in mind, new educational programs will be developed within **Zugdidi University Vocational Education** scheme.

There is a high demand to support research and analytical activities within the sector, to conduct an evidence-based educational process, to establish the level of efficacy of the aforementioned interventions, to analyse the results of actions encompassed by this strategy, and study the progress dynamics. To fully and correctly promote and support the cultural and creative potential of Zugdidi, it is important to properly analyse their dynamics and create a consistent, target-oriented and enabling environment, based on facts and evidences. For this purpose, we plan to initiate a special program, which will support the **regular analysis and research of cultural and creative sectors**, to raise awareness of the role that arts, culture and creative industries play within the common economy of the city, to develop and implement an evidence-based policy. There is a need for planned surveys of specific methodologies, which will very clearly define the Key Performance Indicators, for various sub-sectors.

With this purpose in mind, we will continue cooperation with **Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University** and other partners, to collect, evaluate, and systemize statistical data from annual sectoral surveys. **A Cultural Indicators Digital Bank** will be established as a result of this process.

Photographer: Irakli Gamsakhurdia



# Audience Development and Engagement

Photo: Courtyard of the Dardani Palaces History and Architecture Museum  
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Regional Administration

**It is especially important to make local culture accessible to all members of society and to substantially transform the general attitude of the population towards culture and creativity (as part of daily life, a tool for socio-economic development, an interdisciplinary collaboration process and a source of employment).**

## 3.4.2

# Audience Development and Engagement

It is especially important to make local culture accessible to all members of society and to substantially transform the general attitude of the population towards culture and creativity (as part of daily life, a tool for socio-economic development, an interdisciplinary collaboration process and a source of employment).

We will continue to implement innovative models for audience development and engagement – sharing experiences of other creative cities. During each step of planning and organization of cultural events and activities, special attention will be paid to informing and engaging women, youth, elderly, IDPs, persons with disabilities, minorities and other vulnerable groups.

To ensure effective dissemination of information, we plan to create an **internet platform for Zugdidi culture - a virtual hub** ([www.zugdidi4culture.ge](http://www.zugdidi4culture.ge)) and a **social media page**, which will allow all interested individuals to receive regularly updated information on the cultural resources of Zugdidi; conducted or upcoming events (culture announcements, with ability to reserve and buy tickets to events online); new initiatives, contests, trainings, masterclasses, exchange programs, funding, and other local or international opportunities.

In-line with strategic ambitions, the internet portal would integrate several thematic sub-pages (e.g. **Zugdidi gastronomy; Zugdidi cultural products and souvenirs; Zugdidi cultural routes**, etc.).

Artists and artisans will be able to share information about their cultural products and services on the web portal, using **dedicated artist individual profiles (artist portfolios)**.

We plan to create a **Mobile App** (both on iOS and Android platforms) with augmented reality and google integration to promote Zugdidi cultural heritage destinations and highlights as well as integrate existing and newly created cultural and touristic routes. Mobile App

will also provide users with regularly updated information on cultural news and events, annual cultural calendar, information on cultural institutions (museums, libraries, galleries, etc.), educational materials and much more.

In order to raise awareness of the role and potential of cultural and creative industries, we plan to conduct events such as **“day of creativity”**, annual contests **“Most Creative of the Year”**, **European Talent Day**, **World Creativity and Innovation Day**, etc.

We plan to conduct **Zugdidi Creative Ideathons** annually, to stimulate generation of creative and innovative ideas among youth and turn them into successful projects. By involving young people in ideathons, ideas, thinking, actions and activities will be developed that will be related to the CDS and ensure relevance between its focus sectors. It will also have a positive effect on the wider political, social and economic life in Zugdidi. Successful projects will be supported by Zugdidi University and the municipality.

The role of the press and media in keeping the community informed about local culture and creative achievements, potential, raising their awareness and engagement, is very important. This is why, it is our goal to incentivize and actively engage the media sector in a **special media campaign**, which will be oriented towards strengthening civil virtue and self-identity, via coverage of local history, cultural heritage, modern trends and creative processes. Which also includes dissemination of relevant information, wide coverage of important dates and anniversaries and events of local and international significance, and presentation of Zugdidi.

To increase public awareness of cultural and creative industries, we decided to conduct a targeted campaign, on their role in modern socio-economic development (including, via employment possibilities, especially among youth), their ability to improve the quality of life, and establishing a better image for Zugdidi, as well as their evidenced role in Europe and other countries, both as a stimulator or urban regeneration, especially in the context of industrial zones of cities. The campaign may contain various forums, conferences, and seminars, as well as communication platforms, to popularize international and local best practices and success stories. The media needs to be actively engaged, to cover the cultural processes and encourage better engagement of the community in creative activities.



Photo: European Heritage Days - theatrical performance at the courtyard of the Dadiani Palaces History and Architecture Museum  
Photographer: Lora Kobalia

“Cultural engagement has a significant impact on wellbeing and delivers many benefits. It should be central to how we imagine new transformative possibilities for individuals, communities, the economy, businesses and society.”

# Encouragement of Cooperation and Partnership

Photo: "Kuchkha" revived tradition at Ethno Village "Sisaturo"  
Ethno Village "Sisaturo"

A prerequisite for the success of the Zugdidi Cultural Development Strategy is a well-thought-out, targeted cooperation, and partnership among various sectors.

### 3.4.3

## Encouragement of Cooperation and Partnership

A prerequisite for the success of the Zugdidi Cultural Development Strategy is a well-thought-out, targeted cooperation, and partnership among various sectors.

Active communication and cooperation among various sectors and actors are needed for growth. Cooperative networks allow for the implementation of wide-scale projects and campaigns for raising awareness, which leads to better engagement from the population and lobbying for the interests of the sector. This will help the creative groups to better plan their activities, based on the community's interests, thus ensuring sustainable development for the city.

To achieve this and ensure capacity development processes for Zugdidi, it's important to consolidate various sectors (cultural, educational, private, and public) and implement innovative models of cooperation, to form **professional networks and alliances** – creation of intersectional strategic alliances; strengthening of cluster initiatives and support for diverse networks; exchange of best practices; development of joint projects, which would have the appropriate effect on the sustainability of culture and economy.

It is important to integrate the potential of art schools with century-old histories, cultural facilities, and local artists into the creative future of our city, as a source of new creative products, services, and development of the city's entrepreneurial ecosystem. With this in mind, we plan to establish a **creative cluster alliance "Creative Zugdidi"**, which would be a space for meeting, sharing

knowledge and experiences, and forming new connections and partnerships, while being oriented towards advocating for the sector, thus encouraging growth for local creative industries.

We plan to launch **Zugdidi Ideas Lab** - process, where creative practitioners, private sector representatives, and university academia members will gather to work on testing innovative ideas designed to address the challenges of this city and to develop creative projects. Projects developed by within the frames of Zugdidi Ideas Lab will be supported by the Municipality.

We also plan to create **an online knowledge databank** on the internet portal [www.zugdidi-4culture.ge](http://www.zugdidi-4culture.ge), to share information on local and international best practices and successful examples, as well as on successful cooperation examples between business and cultural and creative sectors.

# Culture Management and Support

Photo: Performance by Theatre studio students of the Youth Palace  
Photographer: Ekaterine Jolguva

We are fully convinced that culture does not need to be managed, it rather needs an enabling environment that encourages growth, based on dialogue and cooperation, in line with the “good management” principles.

## 3.4.4

# Culture Management and Support

We are fully convinced that culture does not need to be managed, it rather needs an enabling environment that encourages growth, based on dialogue and cooperation, in line with the “good management” principles.

To ensure effective dialogue and cooperation, as well as reveal and lobby for sectoral needs, apart from the stakeholders’ platforms, we plan to create a **Zugdidi CDS Steering Platform**, which would be comprised of representatives of public, private and cultural sectors and would actively cooperate to implement, monitor and evaluate the progress of Zugdidi CDS. This platform will develop a detailed **Roadmap** and an **Action Plan**, derived from the Zugdidi CDS, to establish a convenient environment and conditions for the development of the CCI sector, for the next 5 years.

To support the culture and local creative industries, to increase the availability of finances for creative start-ups, we plan to **initiate a program for assisting creative business start-ups**. The goals of this program will be to support newly established innovative businesses in the city. The main objective of such grant program will be to support the development of small and medium businesses, with a lifespan of less than a year. Other than this, the program aims to offer incentives for those who left Zugdidi to return and stimulate the creation of new enterprises, which would greatly aid the strengthening of the economy and local communities.

We also anticipate to also establish **Zugdidi Creative Incubator**, to support sustainable and competitive enterprises and minimize their start-up risks through the provision of various incubator services. The main goal of the creative incubator would be to increase the competitiveness of creative enterprises and create a supportive environment: mechanisms for cooperation and engagement, support for development and internationalization.

Our goal is to support **strengthening of ex-**

**porting platforms / access to markets** and joint creations, through the establishment of local, national, and international project financing instruments, which will in turn help social enterprises broaden their activities.

Initialization of a special program “**Made in Zugdidi**”, will encourage market diversification, popularization and sales of local cultural products. “Made in Zugdidi” will become a quality assurance and entrepreneurs would have to comply with specific requirements to acquire it, which would aid the creation of highly competitive, quality products, along with increasing popularity. Establishment of an internet portal [www.zugdidicreates.ge](http://www.zugdidicreates.ge), will help popularize and sell local creative and cultural products.

We will also actively support **Public-Private Partnerships**, to assist creative and innovative projects. Despite witnessing certain experience of cooperation between the city’s business and cultural sectors, it still has not transformed into a strategic partnership. Consultations revealed, that business is more-or-less interested in culture and creative sectors and would consider ways to be more engaged. In terms of funding, one of the tools will be to create a **Creative Business Alliance** that will attract and engage businesses across the city. This alliance can potentially invest in the cultural assets and projects of the city.

We plan to share best international practice examples and introduce alternative financing mechanisms on municipal and regional levels (i.e., creative vouchers, artists scholarships, small-scale starting grants, “crowdfunding<sup>5</sup>”, etc.), as well as, encouragement of charity and public-private partnerships.

<sup>5</sup>Practice of financing a project or a commercial idea, via attracting donations from the community.



# Establishment and Development of Creative Spaces

Establishing creative spaces in Zugdidi is an important dimension and precondition for the development of local culture and boosting creativity. Our goal is to discover and establish numerous creative spaces in Zugdidi and thus support the creativity, innovation and productivity of the city.

### 3.4.5

## Establishment and Development of Creative Spaces

Establishing creative spaces in Zugdidi is an important dimension and precondition for the development of local culture and boosting creativity. Our goal is to discover and establish numerous creative spaces in Zugdidi and thus support the creativity, innovation and productivity of the city.

The primary goal of a creative space is to provide a place, where people of creative professions could work freely; connect with representatives of other sectors; initiate creative and innovative partnerships, and most importantly, stimulate social engagement and economic growth in the city.

Creative workspaces and co-working spaces enable and support creative processes. These spaces will enable and stimulate creative cooperation and assist social interaction, processing of knowledge, and initiation of innovative projects.

Our goal is to put the cultural infrastructure at the centre of creative processes, by improving entrepreneurial capacities and skills in our cultural and creative sectors, for ensuring improved cooperation and open communication. We plan to position city's libraries, theatres, galleries, and museums as multifunctional spaces - hubs for creative businesses, areas for inter-sectoral exchanges and environments of creative education.

For this purpose, we are strongly committed to investing in creative cooperation infrastructures, such as Fab-labs, incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, and virtual hubs, which will let creative and other businesses cooperate and create competitive and innovative products and services. For this purpose, it is important to utilize old industrial infrastructure, where creative people could gather, discuss their ideas, test their relevancy to the market demands and conduct experiments. This will strengthen the interdisciplinary environment, increase the attractiveness of the city and develop local communities.

This is why we plan to initiate a program “**New Creative Life for Old Industrial Spaces**”, which aims to conduct an inventory of old and unused industrial facilities in Zugdidi municipality and later transform them into creative spaces. We plan to share best international practices, as well as maintain close partnerships with both cultural and private sectors, in the **Public-Private Partnership** format.

As a result of the aforementioned process, the **Zugdidi Art factory / Art Combinat** will be established, which will become a space for diverse and multifunctional creativity, by transforming and developing old real estate on Zugdidi territory. This will become a gravity centre for like-minded individuals, both locals and travellers, an alternative space for gathering and prodigious space to create and share, co-work, learn, socialize or have a sleepover.

Our goal is to support and encourage the transformation of cultural spaces and sites in Zugdidi into **multifunctional areas**, via re-conception of public (municipal) cultural facilities (museums, libraries, cultural centres, theatres, etc.), to provide visitors with diverse cultural experiences and services (educational, interactive, recreational, entertainment, entrepreneurial, etc.). This, in turn, will encourage the diversification of alternative sources of income for these facilities.

The presentation, exhibition and popularization of the works of artists and artisans working in Zugdidi in **spaces of public and private institutions** was also identified as a priority.

Encouraging such collaboration and synergy will allow us to better promote local artists and the cultural products they produce, as well as help them with sales.

As an expression of the social and cultural identity of a community, **art in public places** activates areas, strengthens the sense of belonging, and grants significance to spaces. Public art encourages daily engagement from the community and activates creativity and innovations.



**“Shared cultural experiences foster inclusivity, creativity and understanding. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate in, develop and enjoy culture which, in turn, helps individuals and communities to thrive in Zugdidi.”**

# Promotion and Internationalization of Culture

Photo: Little Artists  
Photographer: Irkeli Gamsakhurdia

Zugdidi, by its essence, history, and established traditions is an international city. Its population and thus its culture, are further formed by the relationships, that go beyond its borders.

## 3.4.6 Promotion and Internationalization of Culture

Zugdidi, by its essence, history, and established traditions is an international city. Its population and thus its culture, are further formed by the relationships, that go beyond its borders.

Zugdidi is a city, that values and nurtures its international status, appropriate image and positioning, as well as further international cooperation and internationalization.

Our goal is to make Zugdidi an active city, participating in worldwide cultural processes and events, and position it appropriately on an international arena by highlighting its distinctiveness and attractiveness.

In order, for Zugdidi to become an internationally renowned creative city, we need to actively use **international networks and partnerships**, to create possibilities for our artists and organizations for more cultural exchanges. This will, in turn, encourage wide-scale creative cooperative projects, benefitting local communities, artists, and visitors to this city.

For this purpose, we plan to trigger cooperation and sharing experiences with our **sister / twined cities, EU4Culture program participant cities** in the Eastern Partnership countries as well as **World Creative cities of gastronomy and crafts**. For this endeavour, we envisage to promote and support initiatives, like public art and organization of culture days to promote links with sister / twin cities, etc.

To successfully export local cultural products on European and international markets, we plan to increase our efforts (support affiliation of cultural workers, artisans, organizations and other interested stakeholders in international clusters, networks and platforms through supporting mobility (e.g., travel grants, exchange programs, etc.)), as well as supporting coproduction, cultural product and service export, etc.

We plan to assist the creative industries by encouraging local cultural sector representatives' participation in international programs such as "Creative Europe", "Eurimages", "UNESCO Creative Cities Network", etc., as well as creating possibilities for joined financing and supporting coproduction.

To promote local culture internationally, we will support public-private partnerships and implementation of joint projects (i.e., conducting exhibitions, presenting Zugdidi on international markets, conceptual festivals, and other events, and joint demonstration of business, tourism, agriculture, and cultural resources).

# TRANSVERSAL PRIORITIES

Action Plan

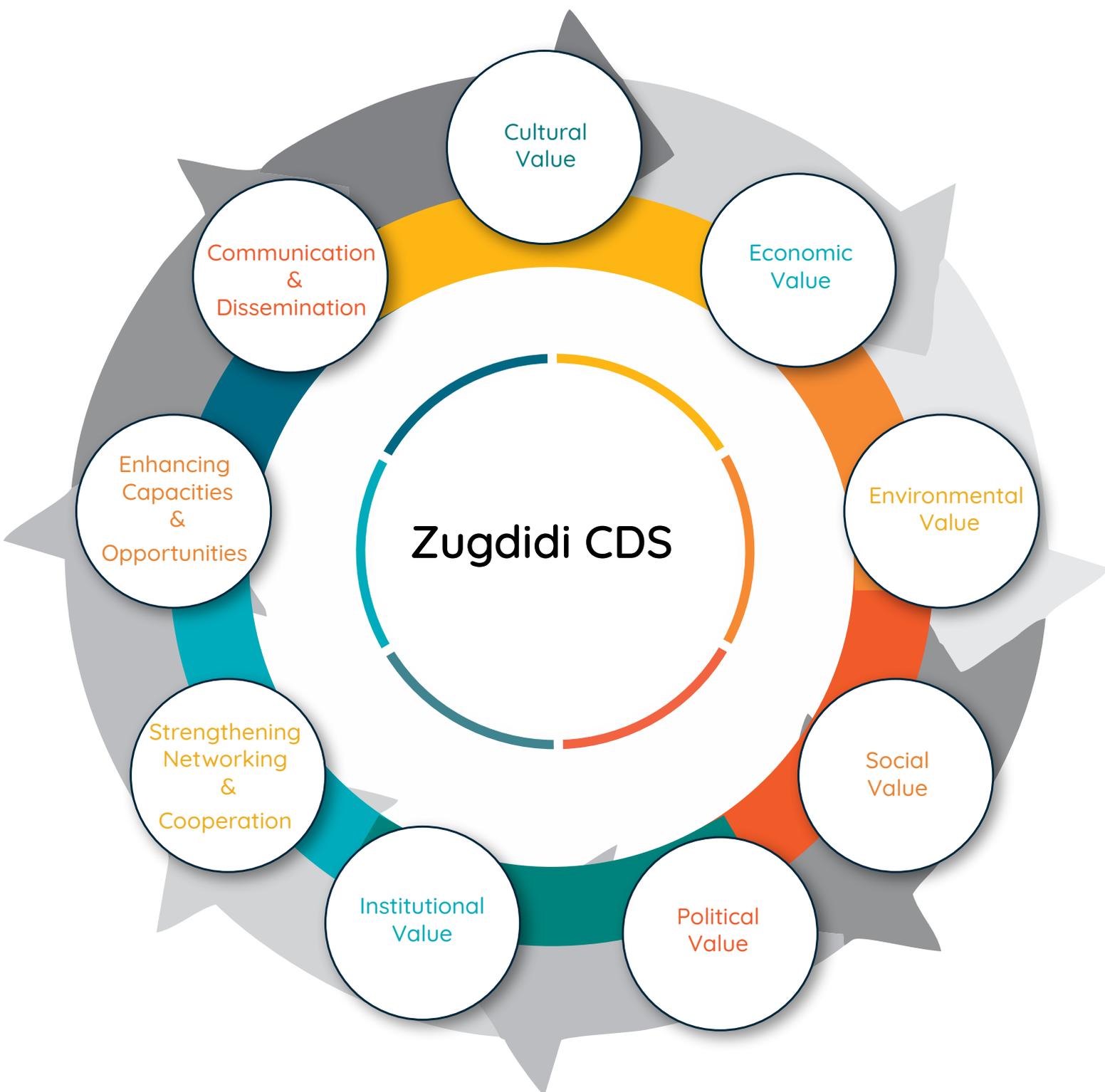
1 ACTION: HUMAN CAPITAL - CAPACITY BUILDING AND INNOVATION			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
1.1	Supporting various training courses, seminars, masterclasses, and exchange programs to improve the qualifications and professional skills of employees in public and private culture sectors.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Co-operation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
1.2	Improving English language skills for employees in public and private culture sectors.	Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, British Council, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
1.3	Initiating and implementing the support programme for artists, cultural professionals and managers.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Creative Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
1.4	Launching the Learning Labs Program (LLABS) in public secondary schools of Zugdidi.	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Zugdidi Resource Center; Secondary education institutions in Zugdidi; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
1.5	Launching the grant programme to support the cultural and creative sector organizations and structures willing to cooperate with secondary and higher education institutions in Zugdidi.	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Zugdidi Resource Center; Secondary education institutions in Zugdidi; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
1.6	Establishing Creative Incubator at Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi and joining of the university into the Georgian Enterprise Education Alliance.	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Creative Georgia; Georgia Enterprise Education Alliance; International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.).	2022
1.7	Establishing a Student Grant Fund.	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.).	2022
1.8	Conducting annual sectoral studies, to collect, evaluate, and systemize statistical data and establishing a cultural resource - Cultural Indicators Digital Bank.	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Creative Georgia; National Statistics Office of Georgia.	2023-2026
2 ACTION: AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT			
N	Activity	Potential Partners	Timeline
2.1	Creating an internet platform for Zugdidi culture - a virtual hub ( <a href="http://www.zugdidi4culture.ge">www.zugdidi4culture.ge</a> ) and a social media page.	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastro-nomic Association of Georgia; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization.	2022

2.2	Launching a special media campaign with active engagement of the media sector, to keep the community informed about the local history, cultural heritage, modern trends, and creative processes, and to raise awareness about the culture and creative industries.	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Media organizations in the municipality.	2023-2026
2.3	Organizing the events such as “day of creativity”, annual contests “Most creative of the year”, European Talent Day, and World Creativity and Innovation Day.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; TechPark Zugdidi; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
2.4	Organizing Zugdidi Creative Ideathons annually.	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; TechPark Zugdidi; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
<b>3</b>	<b>ACTION: ENCOURAGEMENT OF COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP</b>		
<b>N</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
3.1	Promoting and encouraging the formation of professional networks and alliances.	Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
3.2	Establishing a Creative Cluster Alliance “Creative Zugdidi”.	Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Administration; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; TechPark Zugdidi.	2022
3.3	Creating an online knowledge databank.	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; TechPark Zugdidi.	2023
3.4	Launching the Zugdidi Ideas Lab annually.	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; TechPark Zugdidi; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
<b>4</b>	<b>ACTION: CULTURE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT</b>		
<b>N</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
4.1	Zugdidi CDS Steering Platform	Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022
4.2	Initiating and implementing a program for assisting creative business start-ups and SMEs.	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Creative Georgia; International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.).	2023
4.3	Developing a detailed Roadmap and an Activity Plan for the CCI sector.	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi; Creative Georgia.	2022

4.4	Establishing a Zugdidi Creative Incubator.	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Creative Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2024
4.5	Initiating the “Made in Zugdidi” program.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023
4.6	Supporting the Public-Private Partnership and establishing the Creative Business Alliance.	Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023
4.7	Promoting the sharing of the best international practice examples, and introducing the alternative financing mechanisms on municipal and regional levels (i.e., creative vouchers, artists scholarships, small-scale starting grants, “crowdfunding”, etc.), as well as, encouragement of charity.	Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
4.8	Creating the <a href="http://www.zugdidicreates.ge">www.zugdidicreates.ge</a> internet portal.	TechPark Zugdidi; International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.).	2023
<b>5</b>	<b>ACTION: ESTABLISHMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVE SPACES</b>		
<b>N</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
5.1	Studying and mapping the cultural infrastructure and creative spaces.	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Municipal Development Fund of Georgia; Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Creative Georgia; Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University.	2023
5.2	Initiating a program “New Creative Life for Old Industrial Spaces”.	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Municipal Development Fund of Georgia; Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Creative Georgia; International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.).	2023
5.3	Establishing the Zugdidi Art Factory / Art Combinat.	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Creative Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2024

5.4	Investing in infrastructures supporting creative cooperation, such as FabLabs, Incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces and virtual hubs.	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Creative Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2023-2026
5.5	Transforming cultural spaces and sites in Zugdidi into multifunctional spaces.	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth;	2023-2026
5.6	Presenting, exhibiting, and promoting the works of artists and artisans working in spaces of public and private institutions.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization;	2022-2026
<b>6</b>	<b>NACTION: PROMOTION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CULTURE</b>		
<b>N</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
6.1	Encouraging active cooperation and sharing experiences with sister / twined cities, EU4Culture program participant cities in the Eastern Partnership countries, as well as World Creative cities of gastronomy and crafts.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
6.2	Supporting mobility and affiliation of cultural workers, artisans, organizations, and other interested stakeholders in international clusters, networks, and platforms, (e.g., travel grants, exchange programs, etc.).	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, and International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026
6.3	Facilitating the export of eco-products, cultural products and services.	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; Rural Development Agency; National Food agency; State Laboratory of Agriculture of Georgia; Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Destination Management Organization; Georgian Arts & Culture Center; Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association; Georgian Culinary Federation; Gastronomic Association of Georgia; Non-governmental, private, International Agencies (EU Delegation to Georgia, USAID, UNDP, Goethe Institut, GIZ, DVV International, Swiss Cooperation Office, etc.) and the independent artists within the municipality and the region.	2022-2026

# Infographic of the Main Pillars of CDS<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup>Detailed description of the main pillars of Zugdidi CDS is provided in CDS part 2

# Elaboration of Zugdidi Cultural Development Strategy

## Chapter 4

To ensure a transparent and inclusive process, and to engage all interested stakeholders, at the beginning a Roadmap for Zugdidi CDS elaboration was prepared and publicly released. The document outlined a step-by-step development process and explained the possible ways for engagement.

To effectively manage the process of CDS elaboration, a CDS Steering Group was established at the municipality. The board was composed of the staff members of the municipality city hall and the invited experts.

The CDS is based on an in-depth analysis of CCI, surveys, critical discussions, and broad public consultations. The mentioned study included extensive public consultation with target and professional groups and all stakeholders. This allowed for determining local cultural resources and conditions, the conduct of full-scale situational analysis, correct definition of existing values and ambitions. The process involved a thorough analysis of existing documentation (thematic surveys, assessments, reports, various strategic documents, action plans, etc), as well as the identification and evaluation of the professionals' and public opinions (through sectoral and thematic meetings, target group surveys and research), which played an important and integral part in reimagining the role and potential of culture and creative industries.

At the beginning of the elaboration process, a cycle of thematic meetings was held with representatives from target sectors, led by an invited expert, along with a representative of the steering group. Participants of the meetings were active and leading individuals representing the local cultural and creative sectors. These professionals have the best understanding of the local creative context, they spoke openly about the problems and challenges the sector is facing and the issues that need to be addressed.

Information about these meetings was published on the social page of the Strategy, at least a week prior, so that any interested individual could register and participate. At least, **2** working meetings were conducted with each sectoral and thematic group. Further, participants were able to submit their additional opinions in-between meetings.

During the elaboration process of this strategy, the following events were conducted: a kick-off meeting, which also included a public presentation of the Roadmap for Zugdidi CDS elaboration; **70** individual meetings; **2** public meetings to discuss the first draft and the final version of the CDS; **30** sectoral and thematic meetings and workshops. Due to the COVID-19 regulations in the country, meetings were held in physical, hybrid, or fully online formats. Meetings were attended by **650** participants in total. All meetings were planned and conducted with respect and adherence to the principle of inclusion, inter alia the gender equality. Due to the importance and specificity of the subject, locations and formats of the meetings were selected in a manner to be accessible to the persons with disabilities and representatives of organizations working on their issues.

During the sectoral and thematic working meetings so-called “problem tree” and “SWOT” analysis methods were used to carefully identify strengths, weaknesses, existing opportunities and threats faced by the culture and creative sectors in Zugdidi, as well as their possible solutions. At the end of each month, the CDS Steering Group prepared and published a monthly report, which contained detailed information about the outcomes of the meetings conducted during the reporting month, a list of participants, main findings, and plans. Reports also shared the results of the surveys and questionnaires conducted during the process.

**2 thematic studies** were conducted during the elaboration of the strategy, within which **2** questionnaire-based surveys were undertaken. One of them was public – to measure public opinion, which was available via online platforms. Fruitful cooperation was established with Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University to define thematic studies their topics and methodologies, as well as plan and conduct them. University students widely participated as well.

#### List of conducted studies and surveys:

-  **Study of Zugdidi municipality administrative and cultural resources. 15 legal entities registered in the municipality took part in the study;**
-  **Study of existing resources, opportunities, and necessities of the CCI of Zugdidi municipality. Within the scope of the research, 110 entities were identified as target objects, out of which 41 participated in the survey, and in-depth research was conducted with 5 entities, a total of 46 legal entities or individuals participated in the survey;**
-  **Questionnaire-based survey to identify cultural opportunities, potentials and priorities, and the challenges and obstacles in the sector in Zugdidi;**
-  **Questionnaire-based survey to identify challenges, needs, solutions, and potential, within cultural and creative sectors in Zugdidi.**

**In total, 87 respondents participated in the aforementioned surveys.**

Based on the results of sectoral and thematic meetings, the findings of studies and surveys, as well as the analysis of relevant materials throughout the **6** months, the CDS Steering Group has elaborated **3** versions (the concept, first draft, and final version) of the CDS. All versions of the CDS were gradually shared with all stakeholders and it was publicly posted on a special online platform so that all stakeholders could access it and share additional recommendations and opinions. Additionally, all working versions of the strategy were discussed during meetings with sectoral and thematic groups. To ensure maximum public engagement in the development process, a public presentation and discussion of the working versions took place. The strategy was regularly updated and refined, considering the views expressed during the meetings and the comments and recommendations received through various means.

Given that the implementation of the Cultural Development Strategy is primarily the responsibility of the relevant state institutions, it needed to be understandable and acceptable to them. For this purpose, at all stages of the document development, working meetings and presentations were held for the staff of Zugdidi Municipality City Hall and City Council, where opinions and recommendations from the public were discussed, and opinions were summarized and harmonized.

Additionally, to increase youth engagement in the process of drafting Zugdidi CDS, a creative Ideathon – creative ideas’ contest – “Your idea for future Zugdidi” was held in Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University, with the support of the City Hall and its partners. **11** ideas were registered for the contest. After analysing the submitted ideas, by the decision of the selection committee, the authors of all eleven ideas was allowed to participate in the Ideation.



As a result, **3** winning teams of Zugdidi Creative Ideathon were announced: **1st** place: Eco-friendly Boxes - children for the preservation of the Colchis boxwood (*Buxus Colchica*); **2nd** place: Smart Space; **3rd** place: Museum of Culture. All participants were awarded certificates, while the winners received financial awards and diplomas. All ideas of the Ideathon were integrated into the strategy document and its action plan. Special mentorship programs will be provided for the authors of the aforementioned ideas, to transform their ideas into successful projects.

To ensure the transparency of CDS elaboration and its action plan, as well as, to involve the cultural field experts in the process, a public communication plan was developed. A dedicated web page (<http://zugdidi.mun.gov.ge/ge/zugdidi4culture>) and a social media (Facebook) page (<https://www.facebook.com/z4culture>) were launched with regularly updated information about the working process, documents, and key partners. Additionally, a dedicated e-mail address [zugdidi4culture@gmail.com](mailto:zugdidi4culture@gmail.com) was created that enabled all interested individuals to send their notes, recommendations, thoughts, etc.

As there has never existed a special web page for culture in Zugdidi before, the CDS Steering Group decided to dedicate the strategy social (Facebook) page <https://www.facebook.com/z4culture> for a space, where any interested individual could receive full information on cultural opportunities (grants, competitions, exchange programs, training programs, master-classes, scholarships, events, etc.) and keep track of any planned or conducted cultural events. Relevant information was regularly posted to the page, which significantly increased its popularity and users. Today, more than **1,000** users visit the page and access relevant information and resources.

To raise awareness of a wide audience about the Zugdidi cultural resources and potential, during the CDS elaboration process, a special internet campaign “Did you know that...?” has been launched, during which informative banners have been posted regularly.

To promote the CDS development process, increase engagement, and support independent and young artists an information campaign was launched on the strategy social page by publishing their quotes and remarks about the Zugdidi culture strategy.

Zugdidi Cultural Development Strategy was developed in accordance with the national legislation, approved state and local strategies and their development plans. It is fully in line with the international, inter alia EU, best practices.

### National level

The functioning of the local self-government is regulated by the European Charter on Local Self-Government”, the Constitution of Georgia, the organic law of Georgia “Local Self-Government Code” and other national legislative and normative acts. Thus, the goals and objectives envisaged by the Culture Development Strategy of Zugdidi Municipality fully

share and are based on the above-mentioned legislative framework and approaches.

Additionally, this strategy was developed based on the priorities set in “Culture Strategy 2025”, while considering the results of the study and analysis of cultural resources and potential of the municipality. It reflects the priorities of the Government of Georgia and sectoral or multi-sectoral development directions related to the development of culture, arts and creativity. To ensure the sustainable management and development of the cultural sector at the local level, aside from the state-level strategic documents, CDS also relies on strategic documents for other sectors, relevant action plans and studies, as follows:

-  [Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025;](#)
-  [Georgian Tourism Development Strategy 2025;](#)
-  [Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2021;](#)
-  [Strategy for Development of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region for 2014-2021;](#)
-  [2019 Action Plan for Development of Tourism in Samegrelo – USAID Zrda Activity in Georgia;](#)
-  [Building Integrity and Transparency of the City Hall of Zugdidi Municipality \(2020-2023\);](#)
-  [Zugdidi 2022-2025 Mid-Term Priorities;](#)
-  [Zugdidi Municipality Youth Development Strategy Action Plan 2019-2022;](#)
-  [Zugdidi Cultural Map – Association “Merkuri”;](#)
-  [Guide to Ways of Initiating, Managing and Developing Creative Spaces – LEPL Creative Georgia;](#)
-  [Study of the Craft Sector of Georgia – Danish Refugee Council;](#)
-  [Samegrelo Region Gastro-Tourism strategy – USAID Zrda Activity in Georgia, drafted by Dalila Tsatava.](#)

## International level

By carefully planning out consistent development and adequate usage of culture and cultural resources, this strategy will serve to strengthen the local communities, as well as, support and promotion of local culture and heritage as shared European values, with the goal of their successful and sustainable integration within the pan-European cultural map. Approaches and principles, envisioned in this document, contribute to the achievement of the SDGs<sup>7</sup>.

The strategy is based on international conventions, reports, sectoral guidelines and considers the international examples of developing such strategies, including:

-  The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Paris, UNESCO, 2005, October 20; Ex-
-  Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, UNESCO, 2003, October 17; UNES-
-  Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage. Paris, 1972, October 16;
-  European Cultural Convention, European Union 1954;
-  Europe Landscape Convention, European Union, Florence, 2000;
-  Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention), Council of Europe, Faro, 2005;
-  European Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century, European Union, Paris, 2018.

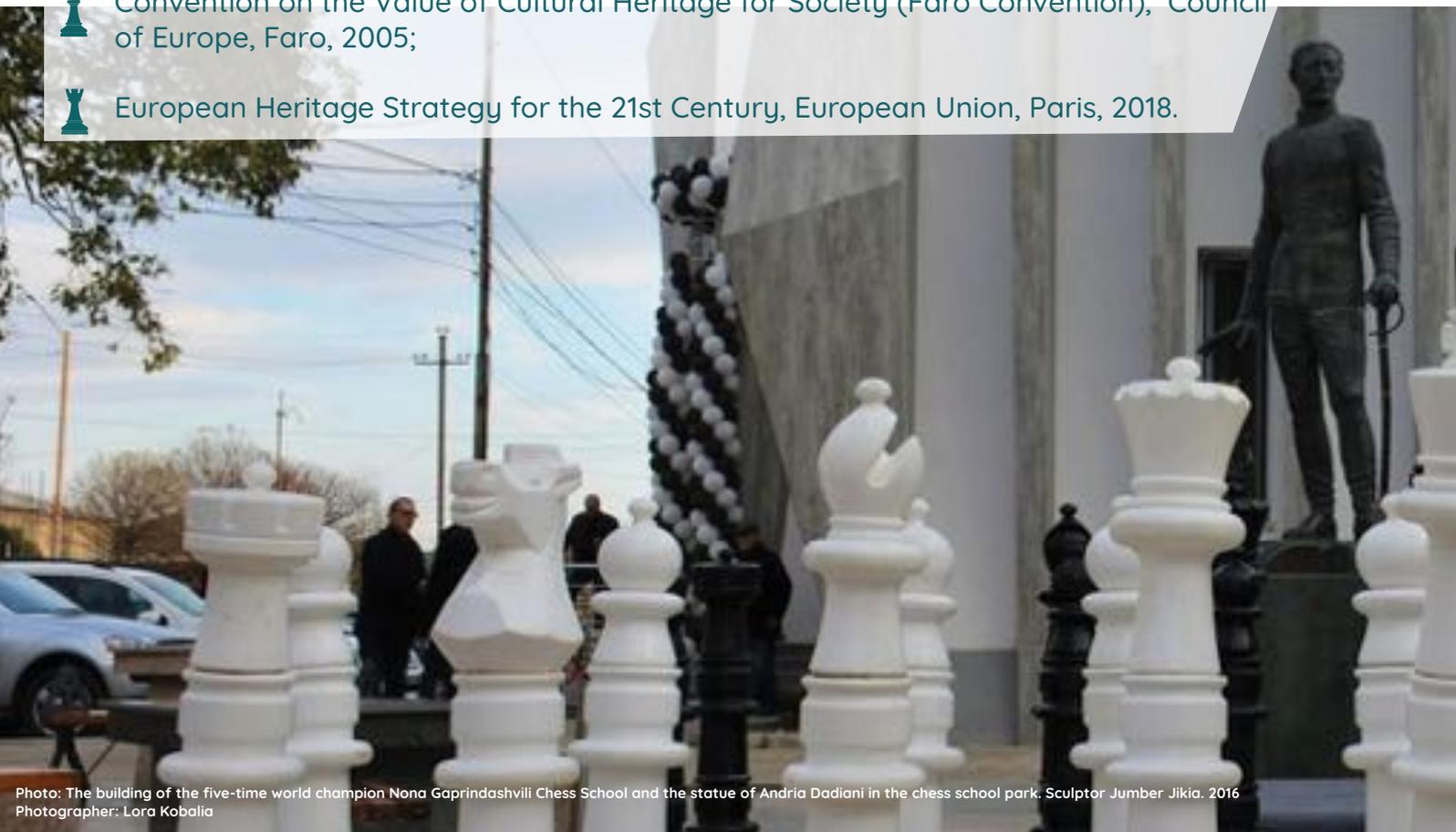
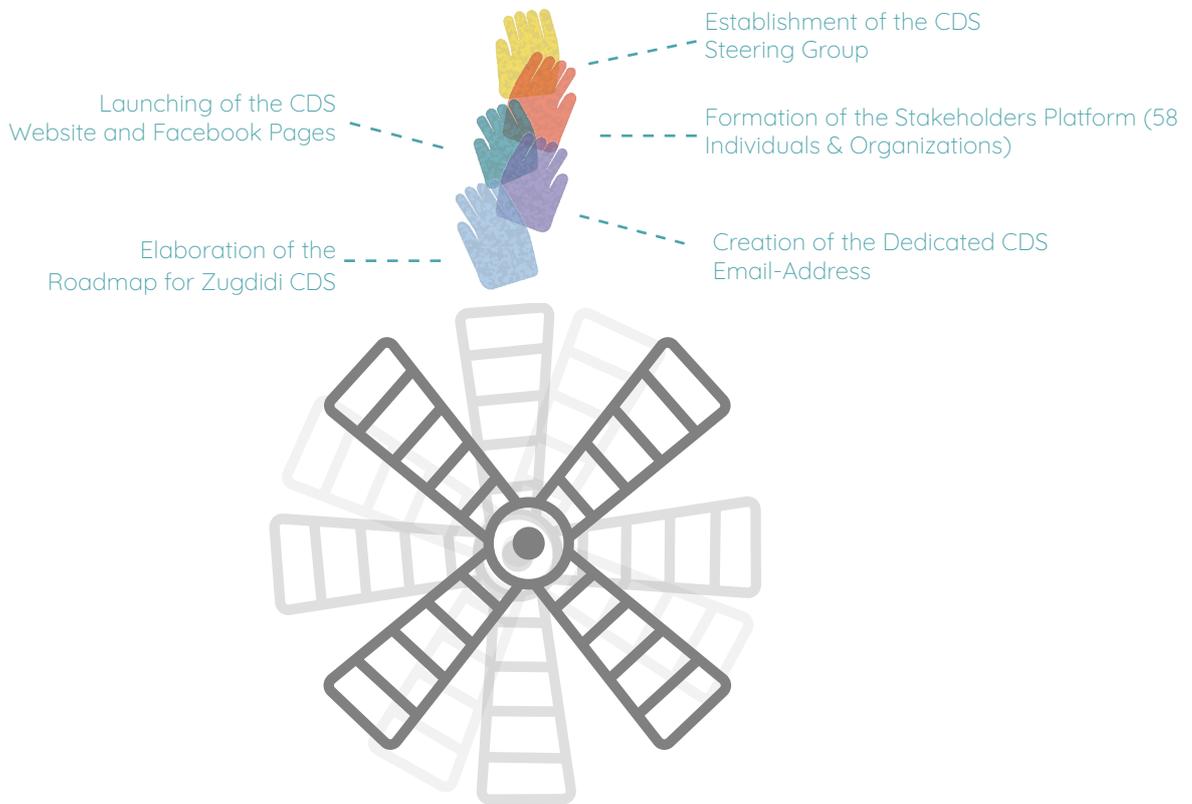


Photo: The building of the five-time world champion Nona Gaprindashvili Chess School and the statue of Andria Dadiani in the chess school park. Sculptor Jumber Jikia. 2016  
Photographer: Lora Kobalia

<sup>7</sup>In particular - Goal 1 – No poverty; Goal 4 – Quality education; Goal 5 – Gender equality; Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth; Goal 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure; Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities; Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production; Goal 15 – Life on land; Goal 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions; Goal 17 – Partnership for the goals.

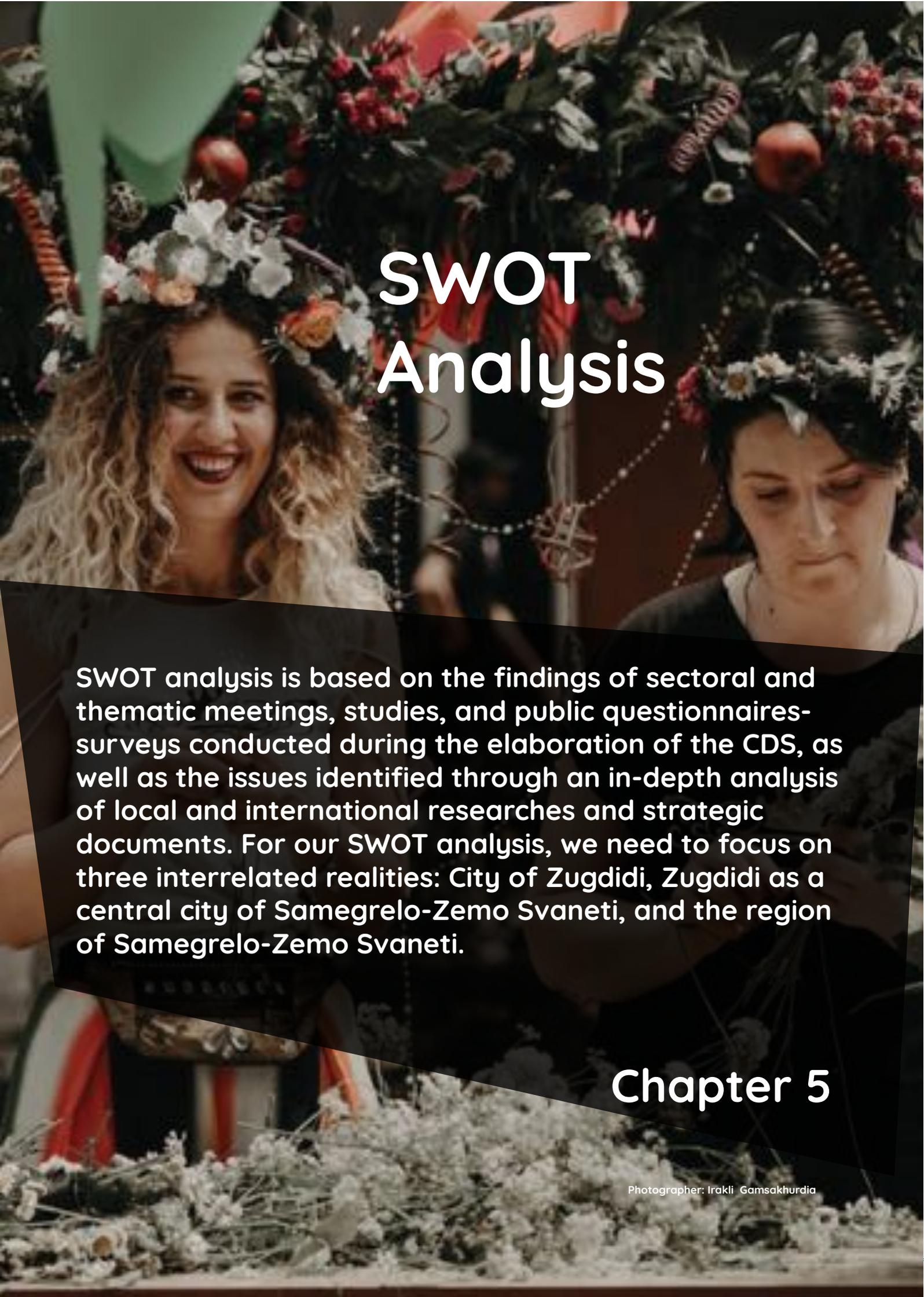
# Information Outreach and Public Engagement Info-Graphic

## Preparation Phase



## Action Phase





# SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is based on the findings of sectoral and thematic meetings, studies, and public questionnaires-surveys conducted during the elaboration of the CDS, as well as the issues identified through an in-depth analysis of local and international researches and strategic documents. For our SWOT analysis, we need to focus on three interrelated realities: City of Zugdidi, Zugdidi as a central city of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, and the region of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti.

## Chapter 5

# Internal

## S Strengths

- **Incredibly** rich cultural and historical heritage;
- **Cultural** and ecological assets, cultural and natural heritage of Zugdidi and the region;
- **Beneficial** natural and climatic conditions and resources;
- **Diverse** potential for cultural tourism development;
- **Abundance** of rituals and practices;
- **Distinct** traditional creativeness;
- **Readiness** of the cultural sector representatives and interested local communities;
- **Willingness** of the local self-government;
- **Strategic** location of Zugdidi, on regional and national levels;
- **Diverse** cultural resources.

## O Opportunities

- **Cultural** Development Strategy;
- **Affiliation** with leading international networks and platforms to stimulate cultural and creative sectors;
- **Existence** of DMO;
- **Operating** Techno-Park;
- **Strengthening** of the cooperation inside and among sectors, via creative approaches and decisions;
- **Development** and promotion of new products to increase awareness of and popularize the local culture;
- **Branding** and popularization of existing tourist attractions, local cuisine, cultural, creative and natural resources;
- **Establishing** new educational and cultural product retail zones at or near cultural attraction sites;
- **Engagement** of state and donor organizations in special programs;
- **Capacity** building activities for those in cultural and creative sectors;
- **Transforming** traditional handicrafts and craft into small and medium businesses;
- **Employment** of local population;
- **Entering** local cultural and creative products on the international market;
- **Establishment** of long-term, inter-beneficial partnerships among entrepreneurs, employers, business associations and governmental structures;
- **Integrating** Zugdidi onto the international cultural map.

# External

# Factors

## Weaknesses **W**

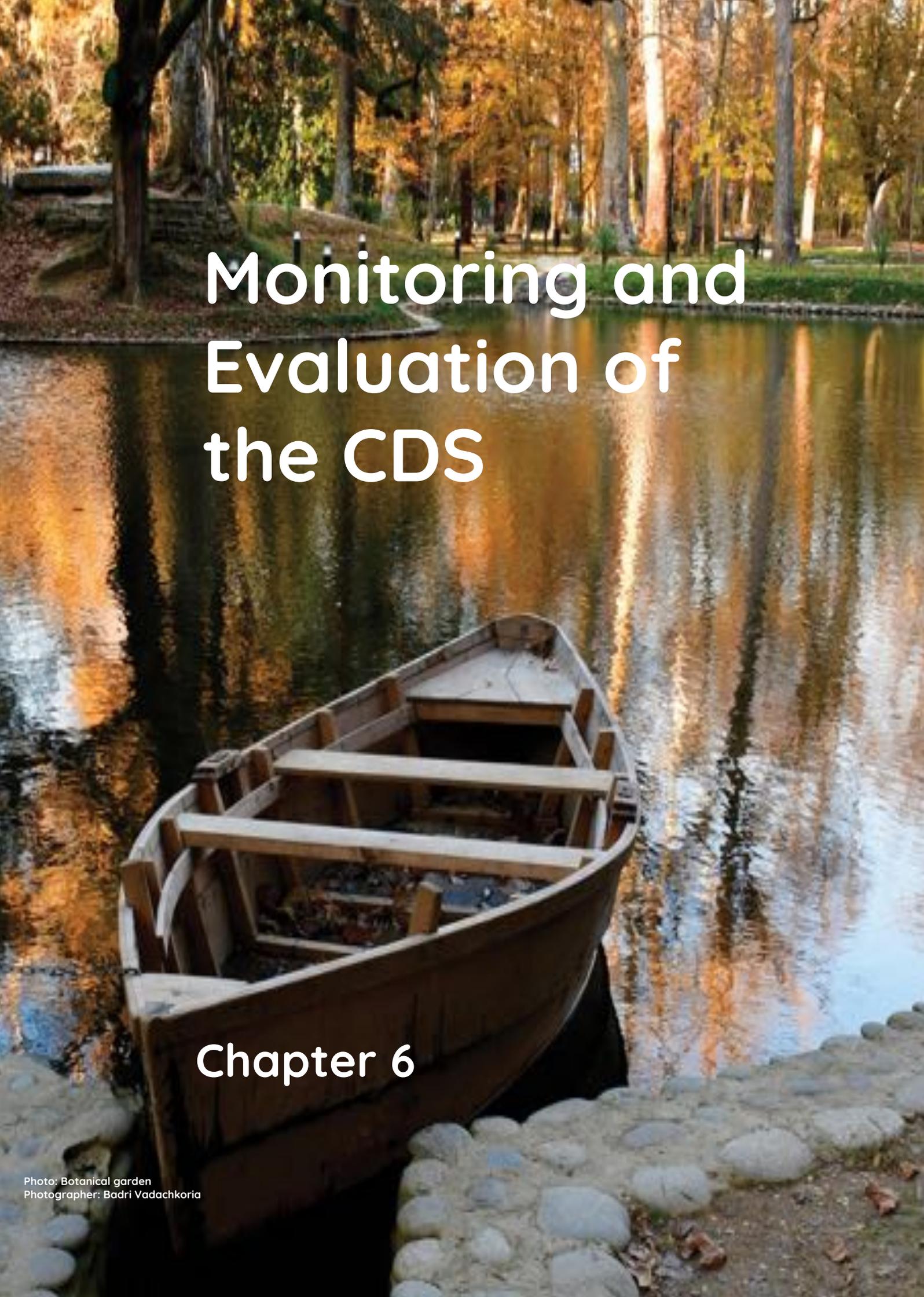
- **Low** awareness and popularity of Zugdidi, especially on international level;
- **Zugdidi** is not affiliated with or member of any important international networks or platforms;
- **Lack** of resources to support professional development of artists;
- **Outdated** cultural and touristic infrastructure;
- **Lack** of Branding of Zugdidi;
- **Lack** of online cultural platforms, apps, cultural calendar, etc.
- **Outflow** of human resources, artists, youth;
- **Absence** of creative spaces;
- **Lack** of information and awareness about the potential of cultural and creative industries;
- **Absence** of short- and long-term vision, strategy and an action plan for CCI;
- **Lack** of development of creative industries;
- **Lack** of cooperation inside and among sectors;
- **Absence** of professional associations, unions and platforms for interested parties;
- **Lack** of qualified personnel in cultural and creative fields;
- **Low** level of community engagement in the process of cultural heritage preservation and development;
- **Lack** of funding.

## Threats **T**

- **Global** pandemic;
- **Destabilization** of political environment, on both local and international level;
- **Financial** and economic crisis;
- **Continued** outflow of human resources, artists and youth;
- **Lack** of alternative sources of funding;
- **An overly** optimistic estimate of the amount of investment that CDS might attract;
- **Low** engagement from government and donor organizations.

# Negative Factors

# Factors

A photograph of a wooden boat on a pond in a botanical garden. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, yellow, and brown. The boat is positioned in the foreground, partially on a rocky shore. The background shows a path lined with trees and a few small black posts.

# Monitoring and Evaluation of the CDS

## Chapter 6



**“The European Union is fundamentally a political and cultural project based on strong humanist values. The fact is that the tapestry of European history, the rich diversity of European culture and Europe’s reserves of creativity are some of the strongest cards we hold when it comes to building a prosperous European future. It is with new ideas, new concepts and new projects that we will rise to the challenges facing us to make our future a reality. And that’s why the European Commission defends a Europe that invests in culture, in education, in research and innovation. These are investments in future growth, jobs and social cohesion.”**  
**(A New Narrative for Europe).**

A good strategy is a “living strategy”, that can be easily adapted to changing environment and the one that can be easily tracked and evaluated for progress.

Zugdidi CDS covers the period of 5 years. The strategy is subject to annual review and adjustment depending on the foreseen goals. The renewal of the strategy shall be contingent upon alternative visions and decisions derived from consultations with all stakeholders of the cultural and creative sectors.

The CDS Steering Group is responsible for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy implementation; it shall study annually the changes produced by the implementation of the Strategy and shall evaluate the outcomes.

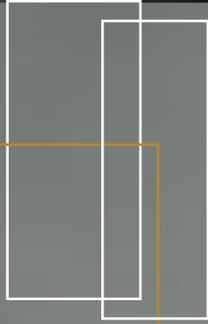
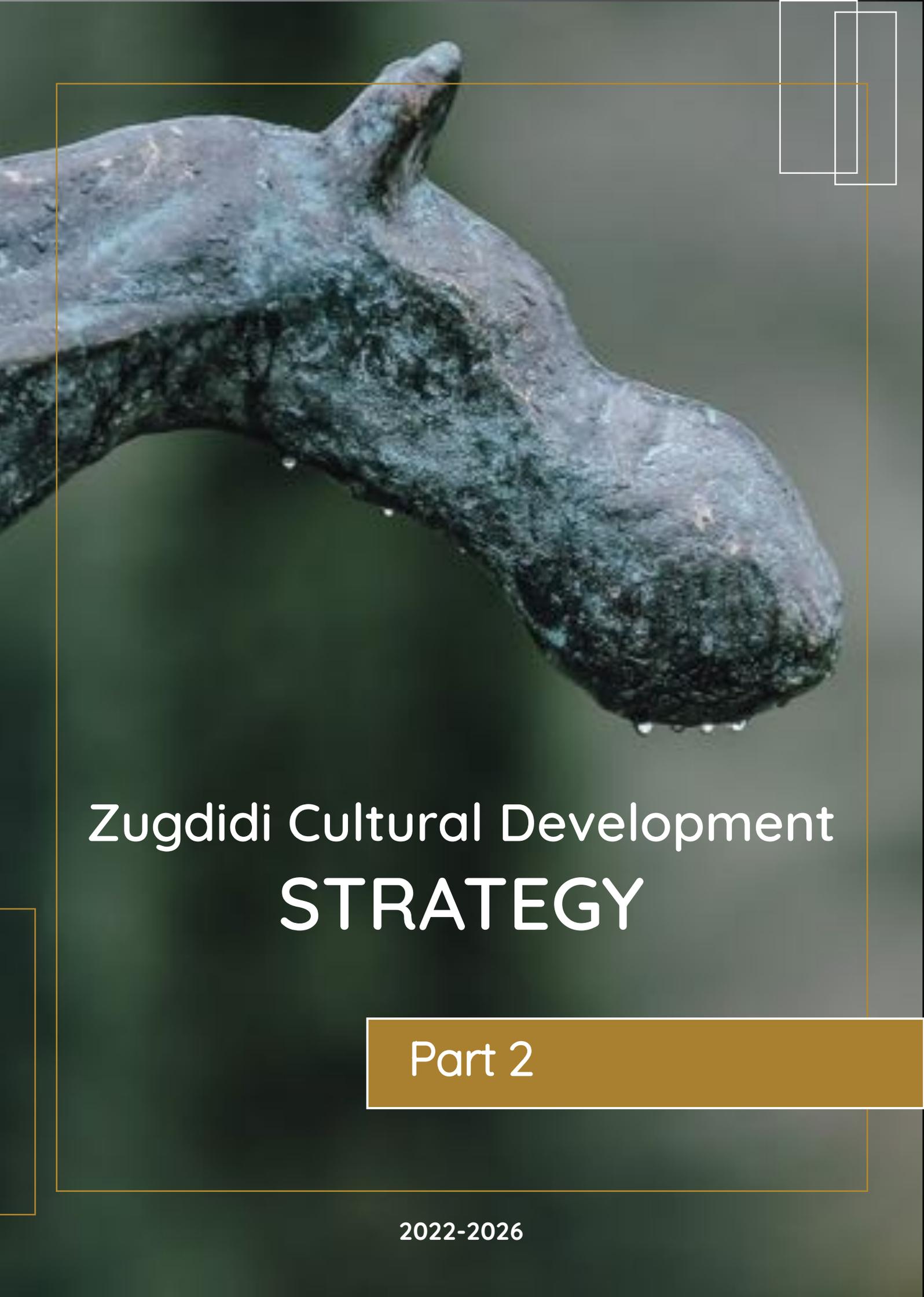
In order to ensure public engagement, Zugdidi Municipality will initiate creation of the Zugdidi CDS Steering Platform, which, together with the CDS Steering Group shall monitor the implementation of the strategy objectives and when necessary, shall propose recommendations. The members of the group will be selected on a rotating principle.

In order to evaluate the implementation of the strategy on mid-term (2023) and final (2026) stages, respective mid-term and final reports shall be prepared. Additionally, specific indicators will be developed, together with the Strategy Monitoring Group, to monitor the achievement of objectives and strategic goals, as an effective tool for the monitoring.

Zugdidi Municipality will continuously collaborate with public, private and non-governmental sectors to ensure harmonious and mutually productive interaction of other policy documents and the CDS.



Design by: Irine Baghdadishvili



# Zugdidi Cultural Development **STRATEGY**

Part 2

2022-2026



Funded by  
the European Union

# EU4Culture



## “Creative Zugdidi for a Better Future”

Photo: Orangery of Botanical Garden



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# About Zugdidi City

Photo: View of the palace of Prince Niko

## Chapter 7



## 7.1

### General Information

Zugdidi is an administrative centre of both the Municipality and the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region. It is located in the western part of Georgia and is spread on Odishi plain, Odishi plateau, and Urta mountainous zone. Zugdidi is at the crossroads on the way to Abkhazia and Zemo Svaneti.

Zugdidi has been settled since ancient times – it is rich with culture and diverse heritage. Zugdidi is rich with tangible heritage – remains of pre-Christian civilizations, centuries-old castles, civil and religious monuments, as well as intangible heritage – oral traditions, including language, performing arts, rituals and holidays, culinary and traditional handicrafts.

As of now, the municipality encompasses 53 administrative units, among which 5 units belong to the city, while 48 administrative units contain 58 villages. The area of the municipality is 692 sq. km. Zugdidi is distinct from Samegrelo by its high population density. The population of the municipality, including the internally displaced people, counts 105 509 people, among them – 18 000 young people. The population of the city itself is 42 998, with 54% female and 46% - male. It should be noted, that by the population density of internally displaced people, Zugdidi is the second biggest centre after Tbilisi. The number of internally displaced people in the municipality is 11 042, which is 10.46% of the entire population.

The representative body of the Zugdidi municipality is the City Council - Sakrebulo, the executive body – an elected City Mayor.



Photo: Megrelian Oda balcony ornaments in the rising sunlight.  
Ethno Village "SisaTura"

## 7.2 Review of the Zugdidi Cultural Development History

### 7.2.1 Formation of Zugdidi

The region of Samegrelo, historically, represents the central part of ancient Colchis territory and its population is the inheritors of the culture, that inspired Greek and Roman authors, such as Hippocrates, Xenophon, Apollonius of Rhodes, Vitruvius, Strabo, and others. The Kingdom of Colchis, later Lazica and Egrisi, was a large state union in western Georgia. In ancient Greek mythology, Colchis is described as the homeland of Aetes and Medea, as well as the main point of destination of Argonauts, in search of the Golden Fleece.

Archaeological monuments of prehistoric and historic eras have been found on the territory of modern Zugdidi, starting from stone, and bronze ages, to antiquity and Middle Ages. This unequivocally tells us, that there was a continuous chain of civilizational heritage here – a very important trade route passed through Zugdidi territory, during the Hellenistic period, which gave the communal life a distinctly intercultural nature.

The importance of “Colchian Tetri”<sup>1</sup> (silver coin dated VI-III BC), production of which is attributed to the Colchis kingdom by some researchers and the Greek colonies (Phasis) on the eastern shore of the Black sea, by others, should also be noted. The significance of Colchian Tetri is immense, it is one of the main evidences to prove the existence of a kingdom in VI century BC, in the western part of modern Georgia. Other than that, Colchian Tetri is a primary object for the study of the mythological pantheon of Georgia.

In the XIV-XIX centuries, Odishi Samtavro (principality) was formed on the base of Odishi Saeristavo (Duchy), with the centre in Zugdidi and was renamed Samegrelo by the start of the XIX century. Starting from the first half of the XVII century, Zugdidi has formed into a fairly important royal city of Odishi Samtavro.

Until 1917, the municipality territory was a part of the Zugdidi Uezd<sup>2</sup> of Kutaisi governorate, it has become a region since 1930.

It is thought that the name of the municipality is derived from “Zug-Didi” (i.e., big hill; in Colchic “Zugi/suki” means a hill) or from the geographical name “Zubi” (Zub – big), this was the name of a hill, later called Mantskhvarkarish Suki (Savior hill), name of which later transferred to the city. The first mention of “Zugdidi” in sources dates to the late XVI century (1572, Father Egnatashvili).

Zugdidi was an important hub for Georgian culture and literature in the Middle ages. Of special distinction is the period of Levan II (1611-1657), whose court employed distinguished artists, goldsmiths, writers, and poets. Dadiani book archive, located in the Dadiani Palace, contains a vast collection of texts. Numerous art creations in the goldsmith’s workshop have survived to this day, among them – unique goldsmith art pieces – icons, that are preserved at Georgian National Museums and Zugdidi Museum.

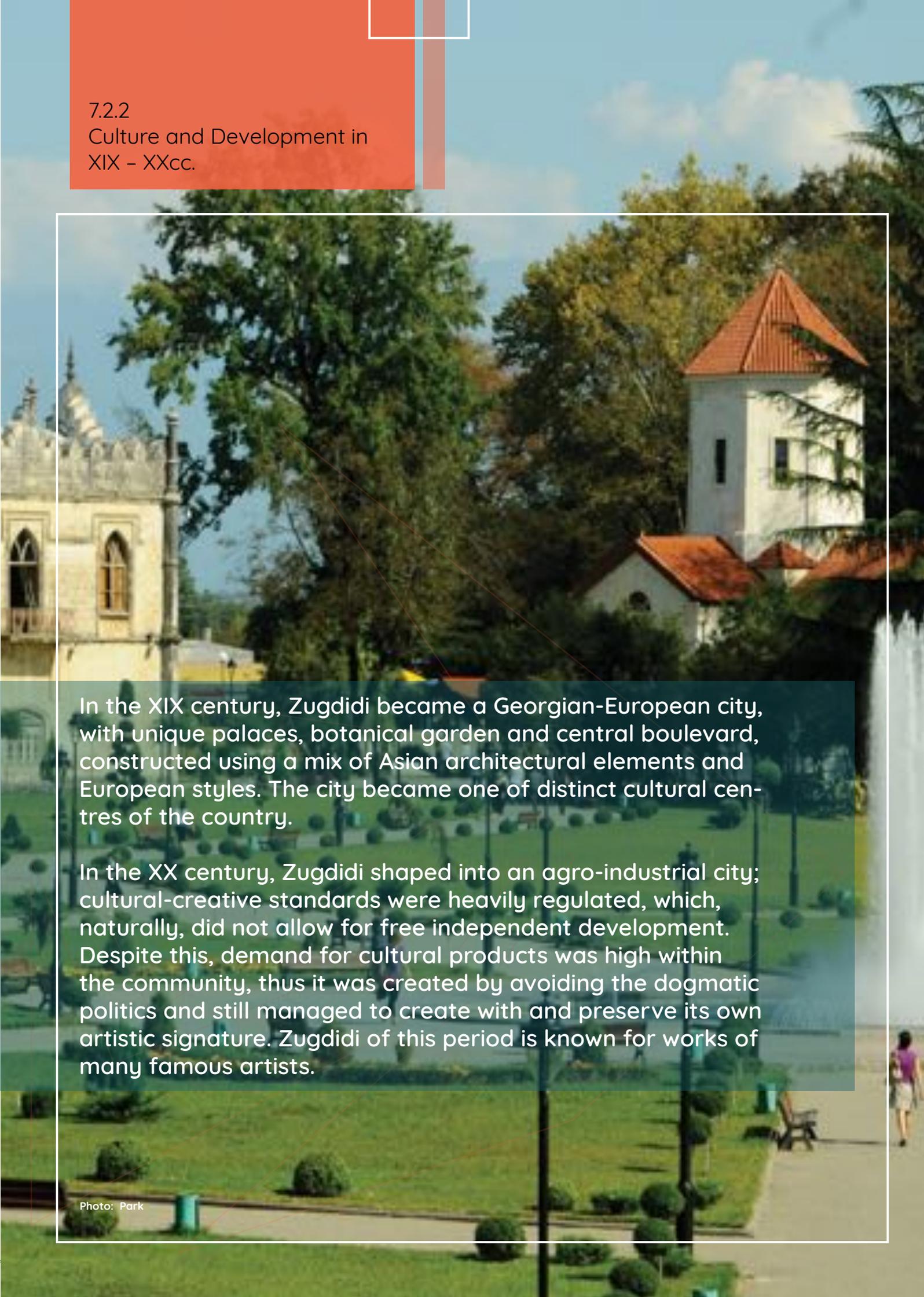
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<sup>1</sup> Colchian money is made at a high artistic level; thus, it has no less importance than the numismatic examples of the advanced countries of the then civilized world and even stylistically resembles them. The earliest pieces of Colchian coins bear a similarity in style and technique to Ancient Greek, in particular, Miletus coins from 6th century BC. The coins were minted for Colchis and were mainly used on the territory of western Georgia.

<sup>2</sup>Type of administrative subdivision of the Russian Empire, and the early Soviet Union.

## 7.2.2

### Culture and Development in XIX – XXcc.



In the XIX century, Zugdidi became a Georgian-European city, with unique palaces, botanical garden and central boulevard, constructed using a mix of Asian architectural elements and European styles. The city became one of distinct cultural centres of the country.

In the XX century, Zugdidi shaped into an agro-industrial city; cultural-creative standards were heavily regulated, which, naturally, did not allow for free independent development. Despite this, demand for cultural products was high within the community, thus it was created by avoiding the dogmatic politics and still managed to create with and preserve its own artistic signature. Zugdidi of this period is known for works of many famous artists.

# Cultural and Art Education

**Schools** - First educational hub, a theological school was established in Zugdidi in 1831. Later – in 1972 a male school, to which a female group was added in 1973. Thanks to the initiative of Salome Dadiani a women’s school was opened in 1883, and the first general school was established in 1868.

**Theatre** – theatrical life of Zugdidi started in 1868 – stage enthusiasts have conducted the first performance. The middle of the XX century was a period of exceptional rise for Zugdidi theatre. Many famous directors have worked here at different times: Temur Chkheidze, Robert Sturua, Dimitri Gvtisiashvili, Vasil Chigogidze, and others.

**Library** and a reading hall – were first established in Zugdidi in the eighties of the XIX century. Since then, libraries and reading traditions in Zugdidi have continued uninterruptedly.

**Museum** – Thanks to the great efforts of Akaki Chanturia, a graduate of the London Institute of Geology, the Samegrelo Museum was founded in 1921 based on the Dadiani Palaces in Zugdidi, where numerous exhibits from Samegrelo principals, churches and monasteries were gathered, the most significant among them is one of the most important holy relics of Christianity – the Holy Robe of the Virgin.

**Crafts** - Zugdidi was also an important centre for crafts in the eighties of the XIX century. Works of Zugdidian goldsmiths, saddle makers, and other craftsmen, were popular across the country.

**Houses of culture** – Two houses of culture were functioning in Zugdidi in the 1930-s; the widespread construction of cultural houses in rural centres began, which allowed for the establishment of various creative-cultural-artistic circles.

**Music school** – a music school and a vocational teaching technical school were established in 1932 (the technical school was closed after the second world war and never reopened).

**Enguri Paper Combinat (Factory)** - was actively involved in supporting the cultural development process. A house of culture was built in the combinat settlement in 1937, which was renovated in 1979 and rehabilitated in 2014. This house of culture was the birthplace of the band “Otsneba” in 1980, which took a brief break after the fall of the USSR. Despite the difficult times the band renewed its activities in 1993 and was actively engaged in Zugdidi cultural life, until 2005.

**Movie theatre** – first movie theatre “Sakartvelo” was opened in Zugdidi in 1959 and later, another one named “Atrium”, was opened in the second part of the XX century.

**Art school** – in 1972, with the initiative of Zugdidi painter Guram Getia an art school was established, which today operates under the LEPL Association of Art schools.

**Ensemble/band** – Musical and instrumental ensemble “Odishi” was formed at the Zugdidi Pioneers and Youth Palace in 1984 and was still performing at the Youth palace, under the name “Zugdidi”, in 2009.

**Art gallery** – was established in 1986, and now carries the name of its founder – artist Matsi Khorava, which today operates under the LEPL Arts and Culture Development centre.



Photo: Classical music concert at the school hall  
Photographer: Nantika Matua

# Sports and Youth

**Pioneer palace** - Zugdidi pioneer palace (currently LEPL “National Youth Development Palace”), was established in 1938 and still operates today, having raised numerous generations of Zugdidi youth.

**Stadium and football** - A central stadium was built in the centre of Zugdidi in 1950, near the botanical garden, and a football club Zugdidi “Dinamo” was formed. Later, during the first years of the XXI century, two football clubs were active – “Mglebi” and “Baia Zugdidi”.

**Horse-riding club and the hippodrome** – were established in 1980, but were lost due to the troubling period of the nineties. As of now, this tradition has been revived and an equestrian club “Khareba” was established at Zugdidi Khareba church, by the head of the church father Iakob Ekhvaia, and co-financed by the City Hall of Zugdidi municipality.

**Chess School** - In 1970, a chess school was opened. This was the most important event for Zugdidi, as it had rich chess traditions and a fair ambition. The first Georgian professional chess player Andria Dadiani and the legendary Nona Gaprindashvili, the five-time world champion and chess queen, were born and raised here.

NNLE Chess school “Nona”, which is subordinated to the Sports Development centre of Zugdidi Municipality, is still functioning today. The building was completely rehabilitated in 2018 and adapted for people with disabilities. The chess park near the school has been decorated with a statue of Andria Dadiani since 2016.



Photo: Samegrelo and horse-riding are an inseparable topic. Horse rider girl from “Khareba”- horse-riding club, at Megrelian Wine Festival-  
Photographer: Nanika Matua

# Publishing and TV-and-Radio Broadcasting

**Newspapers** - Prince Achille Murat, with help of his manager, Claude Ribaux, published first newspaper in Zugdidi in 1890. French newspaper Le Rambavia was published as a manuscript. Newspaper consisted of four pages and was published every Saturday. Back in those time, many people in Samegrelo knew French, so the paper had some permanent subscribers.

The newspaper told of Zugdidi, as well as Georgian and European news. Dadiani palace houses only 1 example of it, dated January 25th, 1892. It is known, that Achille Murat was planning to bring a printing press from France, in order to print the paper, but was unable to accomplish his idea. The French newspaper in Zugdidi was published for 3 years.

First Georgian newspaper in Zugdidi was published in 1920 - it was called "Zugdidi National Announcements". The weekly newspaper represented a new bulletin for the local self-government body. After sovietisation, publishing activities came under strict censorship, as every other aspect of everyday life, differing opinions were persecuted. Later, publishing of newspaper "Mebrdzoli" started, contents of which were in-line with the party's ideology and seeping with communist-socialist pathos.

Numerous journals and newspapers were published after the fall of USSR: newspapers "Zugdidi", "Egrisi informer", "Orion", etc., Journals "Zugdidi", "Egrisi informer", "Discussion", "Aia", "Ebguri", etc. These newspapers paid special interest to culture, with separate columns describing current trends and challenges.

**Telegraph** - 1867 was the year, when the construction of Indo-European telegraph started, with first telegrams transmitted in 1870.

**TV-and-radio broadcasting** - is directly related to the widespread national movement of the late 1980s, when, as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union society was able to gain freedom of speech and establish inde-

pendent media. The early bird in this field was TV-and-radio company "Odishi", which founded their first television in 1989. First, Odishi was a cable channel, but they switched to decametric transmission in 1991. At first, the program consisted of local news broadcasts and films. In 1995 Odishi joined the Georgian television network. Over the time, Odishi aired youth entertainment program "Wave of youth", literary educational programs "Entourage" and "Apeiron". The TV-company actively cooperated with the youth palace and developed joint entertainment and musical broadcasts, for younger audiences.

TV programs also included a religious broadcast "Way of Christ", which aimed to promotion of architectural monuments, as well as "Talks about orthodoxy". Odishi also aired a daily news program "Moambe", prepared by the Public Broadcasting, on Abkhazian language, along with "Cornerstone", which covered all important and interesting events of the region and was prepared by the association of independent televisions.

TV company "Samegrelo" was also established at the end of the past century, specifically in 1990. It broadcasted cultural and creative events, literary evenings, etc., but the company stopped broadcasting in 2008. In 1993 foundation "Eurasia" financed the creation of radio "Eurasia", which was very popular among younger people, but despite its popularity, the radio-channel has sadly stopped broadcasting after several years.

# Industrial Development

**Silk production** - In 1848 an association for popularization of silkworm farming was established, along with a silk weaving plant, that existed until 1863.

At the beginning of the XX century, during the first republic of Georgia, Zugdidi was a space of constant political turmoil, silk produced there was in high demand in countries of Europe (France, Belgium...), which along with economic wealth, also provided an opportunity to get acquainted with European culture, but this trend was to be short-lived.

**Protzer vodka refining Factory** - established in the IX century, is a good example of trade and industrial connections with Europe. A narrow-gauge railway to bring the factory products to Poti was constructed on Abastumani-Jakhuri-Kheta section. Necessary appliances were brought from Germany. After the collapse of the factory, this equipment was transferred to the Gomi factory.

**Cellulose-paper Combinat (Factory)** - went into exploitation in Zugdidi in 1939 - it was a very important event in the industrial development of the region.

On the territory of the former JSC, that owned the mill, 12 new joint stock companies formed in 1996: tea factory, repair shop, cardboard, tare, etc. Nowadays JSC "Zugdidi paper" owns a part of the area, some of it is in state custody, part of it is privatized and refugees live in parts of it.

**Food production** - even back in the thirties of the XX century, a tea primary refinery was established, as well as the Tsaishi tea pressing factory, in 1941. That same year, Zugdidi canned foods factory went into exploitation. Bigger part of the production went towards fruit and vegetables conserves, as well as of fruit juice. Zugdidi had a factory of essential oils. Production of essential oils was a high-income and perspective field. A laurel refinery was also functioning in Zugdidi, where aside from sorting dried leaves of laurel, they also made laurel oil. From other fields of food in-

dustry, more notable are production of flour, wine, bread, meat, beer and non-alcoholic beverages.

**Energy** - Enguri Hydro Power Plant has played a massive role in strengthening the energy base of not just the region, but of the whole republic. This was a clear incentive for further development of Zugdidi industry. First steps towards constructing a hydropower plant were taken in the second half of fifties of the XX century. In 1960 "Hydroproject" has developed a plan for using river Enguri for energy production. Finally, entire project was created in the period of 1965-1970, based on which the construction of Enguri HPP began in 1961.

Construction of Enguri Hydro Power Plant was a realization of one of the braver ideas in the history of Georgian technical minds. This idea envisioned a complex construction of unique technical and engineering models - which was viewed with suspicion by many specialists. Overcoming the greatest resistance became necessary to justify and approve the project.

Enguri Hydro Power Plant arch dam was granted the status of a National Significance Monument on September 4, 2015, by the governmental decree. Since 2021, Enguri Hydro Power Plant is a part of the CoE European Industrial Heritage Route.

**Porcelain production** - among the more perspective industries in the country, was a porcelain plant, that began functioning in 1976, with an industrial capacity of 28 million items of porcelain dishes.

### 7.2.3 Challenges by the End of the XX Century

By the end of the XX century, due to difficult political occurrences in Georgia the whole material and technical infrastructure was ruined – Zugdidi's development and cultural life deteriorated. The economic system of the country was disrupted due to the ongoing civil war, the development process has halted for the time being.

This was a difficult and challenging time both for the city, as well as the entire country. Heavy socioeconomic environment affected the life of the city, houses of culture and other cultural and educational hubs have deteriorated; the population of the city declined, due to the widespread migration. Especially severe for Zugdidi was the 1992-1993 conflict in Abkhazia, which had an enormous impact on Zugdidi. All this left its mark on not just the infrastructure, but on culture as well. Zugdidi became the second city, after Tbilisi, by the number of compactly settled internally displaced people. The majority of internally displaced people have settled in those very cultural and educational buildings.

Despite all this, the removal of Soviet censorship has encouraged an upstart of independent initiatives. As it has already been mentioned, numerous journals and newspapers were published and the first TV and radio were established.

The city has already almost overcome the main difficulties associated with the industrial and economic collapse of the 1990-s and following years, but in light of years of accumulated problems and challenges, Zugdidi and its community need to reimagine and reinvent themselves, by fully utilizing their cultural and creative resources and by realizing and developing their untapped potential. Relative economic stability has raised the cultural needs of the population. The population has realized that its culture, especially the need to access national cultural values, is inconsistent with today's reality.

Zugdidi, as a conflict-prone city, has a new functional purpose and it has become an important springboard for the population living in occupied Abkhazia to share both trade-economic relations and cultural-creative life trends. Ethnic Abkhazians come to Zugdidi for various international festivals and local events for fear of the Russian occupation regime, while maintaining strict anonymity.

This factor defines an entirely new political and cultural mission for Zugdidi – to become a city of peace, considering its painful experiences. With this in mind, the Bertha von Suttner Peace prize was established in 2019. The project was implemented by the Peace Institute for Progress (PIP), in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Austria in Georgia, with support from the Southern Caucasus Office of Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and under the auspices of Zugdidi Municipality. The aim of the Bertha von Suttner Peace Prize is to appreciate the contribution of activists involved in the peacebuilding and strengthening process, to bring peace to the community, and to encourage young people to build trust. Most importantly, the Bertha von Suttner Peace Prize is the first award in the field of peace in Georgia and is given annually in Zugdidi - a city that has served as a moderator/mediator in communities divided by armed conflict and still bears this important mission. It was because of its many symbolic meanings that, with the founding of the Bertha von Suttner Peace Prize, the city was called the "City of Peace" as part of the project.

It is not easy, to find a city in the world, which could 100% be called the city of peace, but there are historical circumstances and peace initiatives, that could distinguish them as bearers of such a title. According to the scientific work of Professor Peter Van Den Dungan of Bradford University (who was a member of the jury for the Bertha von Suttner Peace Prize in 2020), „Idee und Geschichte der neuzeitlichen Friedensstadt“, which studies the cities of peace, outlines 10 main categories, which could be used to define the role of the city and grant it such title.

Zugdidi is a city, that fulfils several of these categories (among them one, that implies cities, which host important award ceremonies for peace prizes, i.e. they respect and celebrate freedom, Oslo is named as the main city in this category) and thus, became a city that bears the honour and responsibility to host the award of a prize associated with the first female peace-maker and Nobel prize laureate. With all of this in mind, it makes perfect sense, for Zugdidi to bear the symbolic status of the “city of peace”. Formally granting this status to a city is another opportunity to highlight its international importance and establish a worthy place on the global map alongside another 355 cities of peace. Naturally, establishing a city of peace will highlight past achievements, encourage ongoing initiatives, and inspire future generations to build long-lasting peace.



Photographer: Irakli gamsakurdia

## 7.3 Zugdidi Cultural Landscape

### 7.3.1 Introduction



Photo: Botanical Garden

Cultural resource of Zugdidi municipality is quite diverse. Despite many problems and challenges, it allows for a way of development, that could aid in reimagining of cultural potential, both locally and internationally.

To better determine local cultural resource, potential, capabilities and higher priority cultural sectors in Zugdidi municipality, appropriate studies were conducted in the first half of 2022 and a questionnaire was published on the internet, at the end of 2021.

The findings of the questionnaire revealed, that cultural tourism and gastronomy, museums, cultural heritage, traditional handicraft and craftsmanship are the most popular fields in Zugdidi and each of them were deemed as high-priority sectors, with largest potential and capability of improvement.

**Cultural and natural heritage** – As mentioned above, Zugdidi is a municipality with centuries-old culture, rich with diverse sights. Of all the cultural heritage monuments, one of the most significant is Dadiani palace and all the exhibits it houses, as well as the gorgeous botanical garden surrounding it, distinct with its diverse flora. There are more than 80 species and genus of trees, bushes and flowering plants growing in the gardens, among them 6 different varieties of magnolias, oaks, atlas and Himalayan cedars, Canary poplar, American redwood, along with other relict and endemic plants transported from Asia, name India, Japan, the Mediterranean basin, as well as from United States and other countries. Zugdidi also includes a part of Kolkheti national park. On July 26 of 2021, UNESCO added Kolkheti forests and wetland territories to the World Natural Heritage List. The natural site located along the 80KM shoreline of the Black Sea consists of 7 parts and contains Kolkheti national park as well.

**Megrelian language** – a substantial part of Samegrelo residents speak in Megrelian language. Megrelian language is close to Lazic language, these two languages separated from the Zanic language (this definition was introduced by an academic Arnold Chikobava, in the XX century) in VII AD. Megrelian, as well as Lazic and Svan languages, are members of the Kartvelian language group. Existence of the Zanic language coincides with the period when Kolkheti/Egrisi kingdoms existed. At the time, it was widely spread across western Georgia. Megrelians, along with other Kartvelian tribes, actively participated in the formation of Georgian kingdom and development of Georgian culture. Despite the dissolution of Georgian kingdom in the XVI century, Megrelian people considered themselves an integral part of Georgian culture.

As of today, Megrelian language does not have an official language status. Number of people who speak it is gradually reducing.

UNESCO entered Megrelian and Svan languages in the list of languages facing the risk of extinction.

**Music** – Megrelian culture also stands out by its polyphonic music and musical works sung in Megrelian language. People of this region believe, that their music represents the tragic history of Samegrelo, constantly ravaged by wars. Megrelian romantic songs are, often, accompanied by Chonguri (wooden instrument with 4 strings).

**Fashion and design** – several artefacts have been found on Zugdidi territory, as a result of archaeological excavations, that point to high aesthetic sense of the local population. Fashion and the accessories associated with it are presented items created with precious and semi-precious materials. It should be noted, that these accessories were meant for the middle-class and were meant as everyday items. The fashion sense changed over time, which naturally reflected on trends. According to the historical document sources available to us, fashion and applicable design in Zugdidi switched to classical sense in the middle of the XIX century. Fashion was especially under scrutiny among the people of higher classes and at various salon, ballroom and carnival events, usually conducted at Dadiani palace. This is evidenced by descriptions, photographs, clothes, jewellery, hairstyles, furniture, rooms and cabinets, etc.

Close relations with European civilization, namely France, have significantly evolved cultural and creative life of Zugdidi, with fashion, design, applicative arts, salon meetings, etc. This encouraged the establishment of new and innovative trends and their harmonious merging with local traditions. European decorators worked on developing design and styles for the botanical gardens at Zugdidi palace. European architects were also planning new palaces. Planning activities for streets and boulevards started at the end of the XIX century, streets were being paved, building facades were decorated, etc. Sadly, sovietisation has left a scar on fashion and design trade, as with other fields of life.

**Gastronomy** – It is impossible, to speak of Zugdidi, without mentioning Megrelian cuisine. Traditional Megrelian food is spicy and rich with spices. Reason for this is, that back in the day, Malaria posed a huge risk for Samegrelo, due its soft, sub-tropical climate and as the locals observed, eating peppers in large quantity seemed to halt the illness. Ultimately, hot spices became a staple for Megrelian cuisine. Gastronomy of this region is also distinguished by the diversity of dairy products, most people know Megrelian Selegini, or Sulguni cheese, which is a true pearl of Megrelian gastronomy, as well as Ajika, but the most popular choice is Gebjalia – made with Ghomi and new Sulguni, it leaves no one unsatisfied.

**Wine** – There are more than 500 species of grapevine in Georgia, 60 out of which grow in Samegrelo. The most famous of them is Ojaleshi variety, which makes the best wine. It is a semi-sweet red wine, with faint aroma of rose and a crimson red colour.

**Resort zones** – Zugdidi municipality is known for its abundance and diversity of resorts – on its territory, you can encounter 3 completely

different resorts.

Tchkaduashi is a balneological-climatic resort, where mountain and sea climates merge together. You can visit pieces of heritage from the Middle Ages, within the village.

Anaklia is a beach and climatic resort with rich history. There is a theory, that claims, that it was one of the colonies of city Heraclea of Ponto kingdom. It did not lose its significance in Middle Ages as well, as it acted as an important dock for Odishi kingdom and traded with Trabzon and Constantinople. Anaklia-Ganmukhuri beach resort industrial zone is visited by up to 100 000 visitors annually. An electronic music festival GEM Fest is hosted in Anaklia each year, since 2015, which only increases the popularity of the resort.

Tsaishi is a balneological resort, known for its hyperthermic and hypothermic mineral waters, the healing characteristics of which were described by Vakhushti Batonishvili. 18 mineral sources of Tsaishi have been studied to this day and it was recognised, that the mineral water has a unique composition.



Photo: "Faces from GEM Fest", miniatures by Robert Absnadze, ceramic artist  
Photographer: Nukri Berulava

### 7.3.3 Cultural Resources and Services

As mentioned, Zugdidi is a city with rich culture, thus its cultural resources are also quite diverse. In total, 50 cultural entities function in Zugdidi, under local or state management, two of which are legal entities of public law (LEPL organizations) of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia.

**Theatres** – There are two theatres functioning in Zugdidi – LEPL Shalva Dadiani State professional Drama Theatre and “Chkhorია Amateur Theatre” subordinate to NNLE “centre for Cultural Development”. In 2021, 48 theatrical plays were conducted and over 2000 tickets were sold (see table N1). There are 47 people employed in theatres (among them – 25 female and 22 male).

**Museums** – There are 10 museums functioning in Zugdidi, with nine local museums consisting within LEPL Dadiani Palace Historical and Architectural Museum and LEPL Local Museums Association: Solomon Tsaishvili Museum; Vanion Daraseli Museum; Aleksandre Sajaia Museum; Iona Meunargia Museum; Kondrate Tatarashvili Museum; Zviad Gamsakhurdia Memorial Museum; Media Museum; Zurab Narmania Memorial Museum; Sport Museum. There are up to 55 000 exhibits preserved in Dadiani Palace Historical and Architectural museum. By 2021, number of sold museum tickets equalled 15 821 (see table N1). Number of employed people – 57 (among them 49 - female, 8 - male).

Year	Theatre	Museum	Total
2019	3 800	24 800	28 600
2020	2 200	9 500	11 700
2021	2 000	15 821	17 821

Table N1: Number of tickets sold in years 2019-2021.

**Art gallery** – “Matsi Khorava Art Gallery” is functioning at Zugdidi centre for Art and Culture Development. By 2021, 195 exhibitions and various cultural events have been held at the gallery. Gallery employs 9 people (Among them 6 – female, 3 – male).

**Cultural heritage** – In total, there are more than 300 historical and architectural, archaeological, monumental, visual arts and memorial objects of cultural heritage in Zugdidi municipality. Currently, there are 10 immovable monuments of cultural heritage, 3 of which are categorized as national. As for the city Zugdidi, it contains 2 immovable monuments of cultural heritage, one of them – national. 9 elements were identified in context of intangible cultural heritage, namely: Georgian polyphony; Georgian wrestling; Georgia traditional (homeopathic) medical knowledge and traditions of its application; Georgian traditional horseback games – Marula and Tarchia; Khachapuri tradition in Georgia; Sulguni tradition in Georgia; Technology of preparing Megrelian Ajika; Georgia traditional Suphra/Puroba culture; Tradition of Matsoni-making.

**Literature and publishing** – as of now, 30 entities are involved with literature and publishing in one way or another. It should be noted, that Zugdidi does not have a printing house, which significantly complicates development of this sector.

A festival of modern art – F5 has been hosted in Zugdidi since 2018, to popularize modern Georgian literature, but it also includes a musical program. Goal of F5 is to decentralize the creative process and encourage cultural-creative growth in the region, through increased engagement of young artists, as well as to popularize Georgian art and support the inclusion of regions in the cultural life of the Country. Since 2020, Zugdidi modern arts festival has been held under the umbrella of Tbilisi literature festival, which has been held every year, since 2015.

**Libraries** – LEPL Zugdidi Municipality Central Library has been instrumental in cultural and educational development process of the city. Over time, it has been transformed from book storage to an information centre, which offers wide array of services and possibilities. As of now, it includes 31 libraries – 1 central, 3 city branches and 27 village branches, as well as an “American Corner”. There are 187 083 books in total, across the libraries. Number of employed people – 95 (among them 90 – female and 5 – male).

**Art and creative education** – There are 4 artistic schools functioning in Zugdidi, among them 2 are music schools, 1 – art school and 1 – choir music school. 2 art and 9 music directions are being taught in one semester. Education in music schools is paid and depending on the direction, costs 150-200 GEL a month. By 2022, 393 students are enlisted in schools, 256 of them on musical directions. There are 87 teachers (among them 78 – female and 9 – male). Additionally, 16 cultural-creative circles function at Zugdidi Municipality Youth Palace. Informal education sector employs 247 teachers (among them 127 female and 120 – male).

**Music and dance (ensembles and creative collectives)** – 8 music and creative ensembles and groups function at the Youth Palace, as well as 4 folklore ensembles in the school of choir music. Additionally, two ensembles are active in the Centre for Art and Culture development, namely senior ensemble “Odoia”, song and dance ensemble “Chela”. It should also be noted, that the goal of music and choreography centre “Odishi” is to preserve Georgian folklore and help its development, as well as promote gifted children in modern music and popularize live music. The centre hosts contests and festivals, exhibitions, meetings, creative evenings, expeditions and concerts.

**Movie theatre** – the building of the only movie theatre in the city - “Atrium”, was transferred into private ownership in 2005-2006 years. It was still functioning till 2015, however in 2012 a hall intended for 300 people was reduced to 150 seats. Number of movies displayed by the local youth, also reduced. Finally, in 2015, Atrium was closed and a slot-club was opened in its place.



Zugdidi youth have been actively requesting to bring back the movie theatre. In 2018, school students, within the “development of enterprise” project of NGO “Saunji”, developed a business-plan and started a petition in 2020, named “Theater for Zugdidi”, goal of which was to bring back the movie theatre.

Development of the film industry in Zugdidi and the Samegrelo region is important not just from cultural standpoint, but from socioeconomic and tourism contexts as well. Furthermore, it should be noted, that there has not been a movie theatre in Sokhumi for 28 years and Abkhaz residents go to Sochi to watch cinema. With this in mind, Zugdidi municipality realizes its role in conflict mediation and reintegration policy. Thus, restoring Zugdidi movie theatre will be an important step, which could be achieved using strategic approaches, which means creation of alternative, multifunctional cultural spaces. Based on these very approaches, a municipal movie theatre may be integrated in one of the cultural facilities, for example, in the smaller hall of Shalva Dadiani State Professional Drama Theatre, which was recently rehabilitated by “Cartu” foundation. This could fulfil a lasting dream for local youth and be an important political message.

Despite existing challenges, “Zugdidi mobile cinema” has been functioning at the municipality Youth Palace premises, for past years, which conducts weekly open-air screenings. “Magic lamp - cinema for kids” also functions at the Art school of the art school association.

**Fashion and design** – there are no programs for modern fashion and applied design in Zugdidi, thus education in this field is unavailable for the interested individuals. First statement in the fashion sector was made by artist-designer Marika Korkelia (in early 2000s) and established salon MARco. There are two distinguished faces in the fashion sector – Ms. Sophia Kharchilava and Ms. Mari Bendeliani, through efforts of whom, up to 30 individuals are involved within the fashion sector (volunteer models, consultants, etc.). Lately, LTD “Detali” has been active in the design sector, which systematically hosts video teaching on applied design. Up to 15 legal and natural persons are involved in the design sector.

Zugdidi also hosts an eco-friendly enterprise, led by an Abkhazian IDP Ms. Mari Bendeliani, which creates clothes, handbags and accessories from recycled cloth, which gives a seemingly useless fabric “new life”, saving a huge amount of resources in the process. A sustainable social enterprise 7R was established in Zugdidi, which popularized sustainable fashion production.

**Independent artists** – 115 individuals are actively engaged creative and cultural activities in Zugdidi, among them – 16 artists, 2 musicians, 15 singers, 2 sculptors, 32 writers, 4 designers, 20 traditional handicraft artisans and 24 artisans/artists working on handmade items.

**Broadcast and media** – 1 TV company (“Odishi”) is currently active in Zugdidi as well as 1 radio broadcast (“Atinati”). Additionally, Zssu TV is functioning at the Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University, which actively covers university activities and various interesting news and opportunities for the students.

Radio “Atinati” was founded in 1998 by a non-governmental organization with the same title. According to studies, up to a million people live within the range of the radio wave and about 35 000 people listen to “Atinati”, supplemented by internet listeners as well. “Atinati” broadcasts for 24 hours a day. Its full coverage contains Samegrelo, Imereti, Guria, Adjara, Svaneti and Abkhazia territories. Musical Format is A/C (modern music for adults). Radio “Atinati” has its own web-page – [www.radioatinati.ge](http://www.radioatinati.ge), which gets more than 150 000 monthly visitors.

Other than music, diverse rubrics and shows, “Atinati” also broadcasts an interactive talk-show, which involves social themes and problematic issues of the community.

“Atinati” actively covers social issues, local culture, supports the preservation of Megrelian language and issues, that would help mend Georgia-Abkhazian conflict. The radio has partners in Abkhazia, who help with the broadcast of a weekly radio show.

With the support of M-TAG program by IREX, the radio is now on a new level of development, which helped “Atinati” team to produce more varied content and strengthen them financially.

Shor-term goals of the radio include setting up a modern online studio, create high-quality media products, increase their visitor and listener numbers. Aside from those, there are plans to strengthen cooperation with Abkhazian partners – start a joint multimedia product.

Trilingual internet outlet “Livepress” has been broadcasting in Zugdidi for more than ten years, its interests span a wide variety of subjects, prioritized among them are culture and cultural heritage. Special coverages are broadcasted, to improve historical memory. Numerous shows were dedicated to Soviet repressions, national movement, etc.

### Umbrella organizations (umbrella organizations and centres subordinate to local municipality)

– There are 5 different cultural-creative organizations of various types functioning in Zugdidi, that are subordinate to the Municipality: Zugdidi municipality’s “Centre for Management of Botanical Gardens”; Zugdidi Municipality “centre for Arts and Culture Development”; Zugdidi Municipality “Youth Palace”; Zugdidi Municipality “Union of Art Schools”; Zugdidi Municipality Central Library. As was already mentioned, there are no independent platforms, sectoral umbrella organizations, associations, etc.

**Pre-school, secondary and higher education** – As for the higher education, according to Zugdidi mid-term priorities documents of 2022-2025, 3 Master’s, 8 Bachelor’s, 18 VET programs are taught and 18 retraining short-term courses are functioning at Shota Meskhia State Teaching University. It should also be noted, that 91.1 thousand GEL was appointed by the City Hall in 2019, to support youth and children with special talents.

Additionally, the nineties marked a new university life phase in the cultural history of Zugdidi. Independent Zugdidi University was established here in 1991, as well as the Zugdidi branch of Tbilisi State University, in 1996 and Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University in 2007. Formation of Zugdidi into a university city, resulted in mobilization of academic personnel across the country. Active cooperation of science personnel with the new university centre has had a positive impact on the cultural outlook of the city. Thousands of young individuals had an opportunity to receive higher education and employment locally.

Zugdidi State Teaching University teaches professions, such as pharmacist’s assistant, choir-master, criminalist, accountant. Other than that, business administration, Georgian philology, English philology, pharmacy, small business management, pharmaceutic analysis and history of Georgian literature are also taught.

In order to see the full picture of the education sector facilities, we should not overlook pre-school and school education, which show some levels of integrated art and cultural education, but there is a room for improvement and capability of implementing new methodologies. In total, 51 public schools are functional in Zugdidi municipality, 12 of them in cities. By data of 2021, 13 576 students are enrolled in public schools. There are 62 pre-school facilities, among them 17 – in cities and 45 in villages. Total number of kindergarten attendants is 4025 children, with 1827 of them in cities and 2198 in villages.

**Festivals** – Over the last years, Zugdidi has hosted more than 15 various festivals, among them: “Caucasus Peoples’ Literature-Folklore Festival”; Polikarpe Khubulava Megrelian Folklore International Festival “Kolkhi da...”; Secular-Public Holiday “Vlakernoba”; “Zugdidoba”, International Musical Festival “Art Kolkhi”; Electronic Music Festival “GEM Fest”; Modern Arts Festival F5; Youth Festival; “Honey festival”; “Strawberry Festival”; “Anaklioba”; “Khachapuri Festival”; “Ajika Festival”; “Tkhiloba”; Kolkheti Wine Festival “Dia”, etc.

## 7.3.4 Human Resources

Cultural facilities subordinate to state and local self-government in Zugdidi, employ 1 223 persons, which amounts to 2.85% of Zugdidi population. In terms of gender, employee distribution is as follows – 40.8% female and 59.2% - male employees. Same organizations employ 0.61% of all internally displaced persons residing in the municipality and 2 persons with disabilities. Number of persons employed within cultural and creative industries sectors is 127, out of which 74% are female and 26% - male.

Based on the analysis of conducted studies, 200 individuals are actively engaged within cultural and creative industries (private and non-governmental sectors), among them 60% - female and 40% - male, 5 of them are persons with disabilities. Legal status of employed persons in this sector varies, but 80% of them are natural persons or individual entrepreneurs.



### 7.3.5

## Cultural Infrastructure and Equipment

There is a variety of infrastructure (closed and open air areas) for conducting cultural events in Zugdidi. Studies have revealed, that in facilities subordinate to the municipality, in total, 24 halls are available and functional, including 5 halls with stages, 1 amphitheatre and 18 exhibition spaces, 6 of them in villages. Additionally, there are in total 10 parks and squares located within the municipality (Zugdidi Central Park (also known as “Skate Park”); Zugdidi National Park (also known as “French Park”); Zugdidi XIX century Central Boulevard; 9 April Square; Iona Meunargia Square; Ganmukhuri Boulevard and Aquapark; Anaklia resting park; “Emigrant Park” in village October; Zugdidi Veteran Alley and Square; Emigrant Park “Pesvebi”), which could be viewed as a cultural attraction, supplemented by the Botanical Garden and territory of “Dadiani Palace Historical and Architectural Museum. Additionally, there are conference halls located within the facilities of the municipality – 7 of them in total, that can host small to medium size conferences, meetings and trainings.

There is also a Techno-Park operating in Zugdidi, a 700m<sup>2</sup> area of buildings presenting an open space, available to any visitor with some free services and/or for affordable fee. The goal of establishing a Techno-Park in Zugdidi was to support and enhance the level of knowledge in innovations, technologies and enterprises, as well as to offer equipment and capabilities, both to citizens and companies. It involved trainings for entrepreneurs, informative meetings, trainings for children, FABLAB trainings, computer programs, events conducted by various companies. According to the data of 2021, in total 77 activities were conducted, with the involvement of 1205 participants.

The infrastructural and material-technical condition of the facilities of local importance is more or less satisfactory. Periodically the municipality conducts their full or partial repair works, renewal or improvement of material and technical bases. For example, Zugdidi municipality central library and American Corner halls are fully equipped with audio equipment, the “Youth palace” hall’s material and technical condition is in order, as well. Unfortunately, as studies have shown, majority of cultural units are not adapted for people with disabilities.

In order to improve the local infrastructure, Zugdidi municipality City Hall is actively cooperating with various donor organizations, for example, project for rehabilitation of Zugdidi Botanical Garden by “Cartu” foundation, full restoration of the so called “Nikoseuli Palace of XIX century within the Dadiani Palace Museum and ongoing restoration of Zugdidi Shalva Dadiani Drama Theatre building. In total, conducted work amounted to more than 2 040 000 GEL.

Also important is the project of building a multifunctional space for masters of applied arts and artisans, which is being implemented by the Danish Refugee Council.

### 7.3.6 Support and Financing of Culture

Zugdidi municipality budget is program-based. An action plan and the budget for planned projects is drafted, based on the project proposals by citizens and interested stakeholders. Thus, the process of budget development relevantly inclusive and transparent. It's important to highlight the so called "civil budget", which is an instrument of direct democracy. Additionally, within the cultural direction of Zugdidi municipality, there are 2 main programs "organization of cultural events" and "cultural heritage preservation program". Program budget for 2022 has significantly increased, compared to previous years, more specifically: program budget allocated for cultural event organizations for year 2022 is 26.4% more than it was in 2019; Program budget for cultural heritage preservation for 2022 is 157.9% more, than in 2019.

It should also be noted, that there are provisions for financing small-scale projects within the "organization of cultural events" program, aiming at supporting various cultural events during the year. Apart from these programs, cultural activities are also supported through the program for "encouragement of youth initiatives", with up to 50 000 GEL being spent each year (see table N2).

Year	Organization of Cultural Events	Cultural Heritage Protection Program	Program for Encouragement of Youth Initiatives
2019	184 100	44 000	62 256
2020	180 000	80 000	45 922
2021	88 600	40 000	50 389. 15
2022	250 000	120 000	50 000

Table N2: Program financing of culture by the municipality



In total, throughout the year, City Hall conducts up to 40 various types of activities, to support culture, arts and cultural heritage (see table N3).

Category of the activity	2019	2020	2021	2022
Anniversaries and memorial events	8	5	3	6
Celebration of holidays and important dates	10	10	4	5
Creative events	10	5	6	8
Festivals and public holidays	3	1	0	3
Cultural heritage preservation measures	8	6	3	11
Educational and informational projects	2	4	5	5
Camps	1	0	1	1
Total	42	31	22	39

Table N3: number of cultural activities by year and category, within the program budget of the municipality

Three organizations under local subordination are distinguished by their own income, namely “centre for Development of Arts and Culture”, “Youth palace” and “Union of Art Schools”. Amount and sources of their income vary and depend on arts and education programs and on number of students enrolled. LEPL Zugdidi “Dadiani Palace Historical and Architecture Museum” and LEPL Shalva Dadiani State Professional Drama Theatre also generate their own income, other than state budget, based on the amount of tickets sold.



Photo: Fragment of Zugdidioba  
Photographer: Ekaterine Jologua

### 7.3.7

## Management of Culture

There are 7 state cultural institutions functioning in Zugdidi municipality, 5 of them subordinate to Zugdidi City Hall, with 3 representing an association of cultural and creative organizations. In total, there are 50 cultural entities subordinate to Zugdidi municipality, which conduct cultural, creative or artistic education activities, both in cities or villages.

Zugdidi City Hall is actively cooperating with various types of organizations, in order to support creative activities and cultural processes, with 7 memorandums of cooperation signed to this moment. Additionally, in order to deepen the cultural and economic relations, Zugdidi has twinned with three cities (2 cities in Ukraine and 1 in Lithuania). Sadly, due to the horrible events unfolding in Ukraine, cities Dnipro (Dniepropetrovsk until 2016) and Mariupol are facing grave challenges. We anticipate active strategic cooperation with these cities, along with cultural exchanges, sharing our experiences and assisting in rehabilitation, after this terrible war is over. Zugdidi is also actively cooperating with an Italian city Casola di Napoli – signing of a memorandum is planned in nearest future.

According to the results of the public questionnaire, measures to be taken by the self-government, to promote and popularize the cultural field activities, were prioritized as follows:

- 1.Improve culture management and raise qualification of personnel;
- 2.Increase funding to support culture;
- 3.Access to international funding schemes;
- 4.Development of incentives for cultural non-governmental organizations.

As it has already been stated, several studies were conducted during the development

of the CDS, among them – one study was conducted with the purpose to identify local cultural and creative industry resources, capabilities and needs. Findings of this study has revealed that the main obstacles for cultural and creative industry activities and development are, as follows:

- 1.Lack of funding;
- 2.Non-existence or inappropriate infrastructure;
- 3.Lack of workspaces.

A need for local associations and/or professional unions for creative industries, has also been identified. As for existing local and international unions and umbrella organizations, majority of the individuals interviewed are not aware of their existence. However, most of the interviewed individuals consider that joining such associations would be an important opportunity to develop their opportunities and benefit their work. Additionally, for most of the respondents only those associations and platforms are acceptable that will not require payment of memberships fees.

Photo: "Nene" Almarkias. Allusion of the Legend of Anaklia, by Robert Absnadze, ceramic artist



### 7.3.8 Cultural Participation and Consumption



Photo: "Pigeons" the youngest dancers of Zugdidioba

Activities organized by the City Hall are available and accessible to any person interested. With the purpose to carry out and promote cultural and creative activities in the municipality, every year, within the framework of the program "Organization of Cultural Events", a total of 20 projects are implemented; up to 15 activities are carried out within the framework of the "Cultural Heritage Monument Protection Program" and about 7-8 activities within the framework of the "Youth Initiatives Support Program". Zugdidi, considering its cultural-historical and geographical context, is becoming more and more attractive for different sectors. It has hosted over 15 different festivals in recent years, including music, gastronomy, folklore and more. During the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of activities, due to the established restrictions, decreased significantly and was mainly limited to the celebration of important and anniversary dates.

Index of attendance of cultural events in 2019 was unusually high. Approximately 20% of the municipality residents have participated in various concerts, festivals, evenings, etc., with low level of engagement from people with disabilities, apparently, due to lack of ade-

quate infrastructure, adapted for people with various needs.

No less important is volunteering. Club B612 with the Central Library and the American Corner are actively working in this direction in Zugdidi Municipality. In total, 204 different activities were carried out in 2021, including more than 50% - in the field of culture.

According to the respondents in the public questionnaire, in order to develop and popularize the fields of culture and creative industries, in the future, activities such as creative master classes, trainings and various festivals and exhibition should be given priority.

In addition, the average monthly nominal salary of persons employed in the cultural sector, which is 650 GEL, is noteworthy. It should also be noted that the nominal salary of persons employed in different sectors in the municipality is at the same level, while in the business sector - 779 GEL. Analysis of the information obtained through the questionnaire shows that a citizen living in Zugdidi spends, on average, 1.5% to 30% of income per month on cultural activities and cultural products.

### 7.3.9

## Natural Resources, Industry and Hospitality



Photo: Ornaments on the clay  
Photographer: Nukri Berulava

The thermal waters in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region create favorable conditions for the development of greenhouses and nursery farming. Greenhouses operating in Zugdidi, Senaki and Khobi municipalities successfully use thermal water, which significantly reduces production costs. In the region, Zugdidi and Khobi municipalities, 12 nursery farms are organized with a total area of 44.8 ha. The farms produce seedlings of crops such as fruits, citrus, palms, blueberries, vegetables and crops containing essential oils.

The vast majority of industrial enterprises in the region are small and medium-sized enterprises. Today, the main industrial products of the region are processed nuts and timber. The most profiled industries in Zugdidi Municipality are hazelnut and tea processing.

Most of the tourist facilities in the region do not have a unified concept in terms of product development and marketing. They do not know what the benefits of sustainable tourism development mean and how to increase revenue by offering a quality and diversified product. Consequently, they prefer to position themselves at low prices as the main means of competitive advantage, which in the event of a small change in the macro environment will have a dramatic effect on

their performance and workload. Given these circumstances, tourism service providers need to increase their knowledge of tourism, related services and constituents in product development, service quality management and marketing. As for food establishments, they need training and knowledge enhancement in the following areas: food safety and hygiene, financial management of the food establishment, development and presentation of local cuisine, diversification of products (dishes) and their proper presentation in the menu, typology of the restaurant and its infrastructure. The interest of tourist facilities in the state structures of tourism such as local tourism management organization, City Hall Information and Visitor Center is also low. Currently the only form of communication is the existence of databases.

In recent years, high-end hotels have been built in the region in Anaklia and Mestia. Currently, there are 3 modern hotels in Anaklia with up to 250 guest rooms and the construction of the fourth hotel has started. In addition to large hotels, according to the tourism development vision document in Zugdidi, there are 14 hotels, 42 family hotels, 3 hostels, 5 restaurants, 5 cafes and 1 canteen.

7.4  
Overview of creative  
and cultural industries



In today's world, the creative and cultural industries are the most important driving force of the economy. If the twentieth century was a period of industrialization, the modern world has redefined and advanced the importance of individual knowledge, creative approach as a primary source of innovation, and the role of small and medium-sized businesses in economic development.

Photo: Each detail is handmade at ORKOL Studio.  
Photographer: Nukri Berulava

According to international experience, the classification of sub-sectors of the creative industries often differs from each other, which is due to the specifics of the countries. However, they mainly include cinema, performing arts, music, art and antiques, architecture, fashion, design, handicrafts, computer games, advertising, publishing, television and radio, gastronomy and cooking.

"The synthesis of creative beginnings, culture, economy and technology can create intellectual capital, which, in turn, has great potential to become a contributing factor to jobs, exports, cultural diversity and social and human development. This is what the creative economy is already creating in many leading countries in terms of economic growth, employment, trade, encouraging innovation and strengthening social ties."

Numerous studies conducted in recent years have shown the growing economic potential of the creative and cultural industries. The sector survey also confirmed that most of the creative industries, 80% across Europe, operate as micro and small enterprises. Small and medium enterprises and start-up companies, in turn, are the main locomotives of innovation in the Eurozone countries. 98% of enterprises in Europe come from small and medium enterprises; They create 2/3 of the jobs and 60% of the total surplus value in the private sector. Regions and cities that are characterized by a high level of creativity are more lucrative and stable, they play an important role in maintaining economic stability.

No one can deny that culture and related activities are largely linked to local development. Cultural activities contribute to the importance of a place or community, mobilize resources and create social dynamics. They develop the creativity of the locals and make the area more attractive to locals, visitors or innovators. Cultural activities have significant economic weight. The cultural economy in the EU accounts for about 3% of GDP and 5% of employment. Exports of creative goods make up a significant share of international trade.

Cultural products can contribute to the development of the area by creating jobs, economic value and improving the quality of life. One of the driving factors for local economic development is the positive image of a place or region through the identification and appreciation of its own cultural values. Whether it is a city or a village, culture can contribute to a better living environment, can re-activate abandoned industrial zones in

cities, bring new life to the lifeless infrastructure of factories and power plants, ports and warehouses or hangars.

Understanding the economic contribution of culture is often limited to festivals, however, their effects can be extended to local cultural and creative components: folk crafts, authentic cuisine, ceremonies, scenery, theatrical and musical performances. Festivals of this type are the biggest event for this or that place and local, participants prepare for this day from year to year, for example creating special scenery, theatrical staging, musical product, etc. which means increasing their level of knowledge and experience. This trend can preserve intangible cultural heritage and create new jobs for local people.

Over the past years, private sector has also been more active in cultural and creative directions in Zugdidi. According to the study, 39 organizations are functioning in Zugdidi, which are in one way or another, involved in cultural and creative industries, among them 9 LEPL and NNLE organizations, as well. The creative industry direction has also become popular among Zugdidi artists, with mainly independent artists active in this field.

2 facilities: the ceramics workshop "Orkolstudio" and the ethno-village "Sisa Tura", which operate in the gastronomic sector. Masterclasses for both local and foreign visitors are held at both facilities throughout the year. These facilities, according to 2019 data, hosted an average of 2200 people per year, however, this number has decreased significantly as a result of the pandemic.

In Zugdidi municipality, two main directions may be highlighted among the individuals and organizations operating within cultural and creative industry sectors: Of slightly higher priority – gastronomy/culinary, folk craft and decorative and applied art – handmade items, museums, galleries and libraries, music, performing and visual arts, radio and photography and less represented directions: advertising and marketing, architecture, design: product, graphical and fashion design, cinema, television, video, IT, software support and computer service, publishing.

From the point of view of folk handicrafts and crafts, we were interested in the document "Comprehensive study of the handicraft sector of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and basic recommendations for its sustainable development", according to which in Zugdidi, handicrafts were

identified as popular and in-demand directions - Souvenirs, musical instruments, icons, accessories, artistic compositions, pitchers, wells, traditional bakery, kitchen utensils, wooden doors and stairs; Furniture, jewelry, toys. Diversity also prevails in the technologies and materials used. Local artists create their products using: textiles, wood, stone, ceramics, metal, leather, paper, polymer clay.

The geographical area of activity of individuals and organizations engaged in cultural and creative industries in Zugdidi Municipality covers virtually the whole of Georgia, including the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. At the local level, 6 organizations were named as permanent / key partners of the sector: Zugdidi Municipality, Traditional Handicrafts Association, Georgian Tourism Industry Alliance (GTIA), Georgian Gastronomy Association, National Parliamentary Library - Georgian Library Association, DMO - Tourism Destination Management Organization, Danish Refugee Council in Georgia, USAID.

It should also be noted that according to the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region Development Strategy 2014-2021, key business support organizations do not exist in the region - business centre, business incubator, training centers, investment and technology transfer centers, leasing companies, etc. (except for the Zugdidi Chamber of Commerce and Industry with very limited resources and capabilities, and the newly established NNLE in Poti, which provides small and medium business support within the framework of the grant project). Significant projects of well-known international and non-governmental organizations in the region are only fragmented if they provide adequate support to the business sector.

Representatives of the sector also actively work in the field of awareness raising and education, with 7 works of various types and purpose published over the past several years: Zugdidi Culture Map (Association "Mercury"); The book "Colchian Tabla", prepared with the assistance of USAID Zrda program by the Culinary Academy of the Georgian Agrarian University, includes more than 50 special and authentic dish recipes; The short film ["The Grand Tour of Samegrelo"](#) produced for a contest hosted by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); Samegrelo Destination Management Organization (DMO), within the framework of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has prepared a commercial [„Megrelian gastronomy“](#); Tourist map of Zugdi-

di (authored by Salome Gardava); [„There's this one country“](#)- Zugdidi (documentary film on the cultural heritage of Zugdidi; "Masters of folk crafts and applied arts" (authors: G. Chikobava, L. Jikia).

As already mentioned, the research of the resources, opportunities and needs of the cultural and creative industries of Zugdidi Municipality revealed that the biggest obstacle to the activities of the sector is insufficient finances, lack of infrastructure, imperfect legislation. The biggest development problems were the lack of funding sources, less support from the state and the problem of infrastructure.

There are three main problems facing the workforce of the handicraft sector: 1. Leakage of handicraft participants in other regions and professions; 2. The need to increase the competencies of existing craftsmen; 3. Lack or absence of different types of raw materials and other materials needed for handicrafts.

According to the respondents, the most obvious need for the development of creative industries in Zugdidi was the development of cultural policy and strategy, identifying the needs of the sector and drawing up an action plan tailored to them, as well as lobbying the interests of industry representatives and actively involving all listed needs.

## 7.5

Stakeholders of the  
CDS

N	Direction	Organization
1	Central, Regional and Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth;</li> <li> Ministry of Education and Science;</li> <li> Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure;</li> <li> Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development;</li> <li> Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia;</li> <li> Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Regional Administration;</li> <li> Zugdidi City Hall;</li> <li> Zugdidi City Council – Sakrebulo;</li> </ul>
2	Umbrella Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Georgian Arts and Culture Centre;</li> <li> Georgian Traditional Handicraft Association;</li> <li> Samegrelo DMO;</li> <li> Georgian Culinary Federation;</li> <li> Georgian Gastronomy Association;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Management of Botanical Gardens”;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Art and Culture Development”;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality “Youth Palace”;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality “Art School Union” “;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality Central Library;</li> <li> „Anaklia-Ganmukhuri Resorts”</li> </ul>
3	Higher and VET Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Ministry of Education and Science;</li> <li> Skills Agency Georgia;</li> <li> Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University;</li> <li> College “Tskhum-Egrisi”;</li> <li> Community college “Zugdidi Academy”</li> </ul>
4	Art Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth;</li> <li> Ministry of Education and Science;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality “Art Schools Union”;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality “Youth Palace”;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Development of Art and Culture”</li> </ul>
5	Performing Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth;</li> <li> Shalva Dadiani State Professional Drama Theatre;</li> <li> “Chkhorია Amateur Theatre” at Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Development of Art and Culture”;</li> <li> Senior ensemble “Odoia” at Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Development of Art and Culture”;</li> <li> Song and dance ensemble “Chela” at Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Development of Art and Culture”;</li> <li> Band at Zugdidi Municipality Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Development of Art and Culture”;</li> <li> Musical and choreographic studio “Elit Art Studio”.</li> </ul>

6	Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth;</li> <li> “Matsi Khorava Art Gallery” - Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Development of Art and Culture”;</li> <li> “Art Gallery” of the Art Schools Union (GNTA);</li> <li> Gigi’s Workshop.</li> </ul>
7	Modern Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth;</li> <li> Georgian National Tourism Administration;</li> <li> Modern Arts Festival F5.</li> </ul>
8	Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth;</li> <li> GNTA;</li> <li> Musical Schools subordinate to the Art Schools Union;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Development of Art and Culture”</li> </ul>
9	Fashion and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Eco-friendly enterprise sustainable fashion (Mari Bendeliani);</li> <li> Individual entrepreneur Sopio Kharchilava;</li> <li> Maria Korkelia clothes house-salon “MARco”;</li> <li> LTD “Detali” (architecture and design).</li> </ul>
10	Traditional Handicraft and Crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> GNTA;</li> <li> Georgian Arts and Culture Centre;</li> <li> Georgian traditional handicrafts association;</li> <li> Danish Refugee Council;</li> <li> Ceramics Workshop “Orkolstudio”.</li> </ul>
11	Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure;</li> <li> Education, Heritage Protection and Youth Affairs Unit, Zugdidi City Hall</li> </ul>
12	Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia;</li> <li> Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure;</li> <li> Education, Heritage Protection and Youth Affairs Unit, Zugdidi City Hall;</li> <li> Zugdidi “Dadiani Palace Historical and Architectural Museum”;</li> <li> “Association of Museums of Local Significance” at Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Development of Art and Culture”;</li> <li> Zugdidi Municipality “Centre for Management of Botanical Gardens”.</li> </ul>
13	Literature and Publishing Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth;</li> <li> Modern Arts Festival F5;</li> <li> Literature Journal “Ebguri”;</li> <li> Journal “Samegrelo”;</li> <li> “Journal “Diskusia”;</li> <li> Journal “Egrisi”;</li> <li> Literature cafe “Art-Li”;</li> <li> Initiative group “Ebguri”</li> </ul>
14	Digital Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Zugdidi Techno-Park of the Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency</li> </ul>

15	Cinema and Video Art / Cinematography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Georgian National Film Center;</li> <li>✍ Education, Heritage Protection and Youth Affairs Unit, Zugdidi City Hall.</li> </ul>
16	Media and Broadcasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ TV Company “Odishi”;</li> <li>✍ Radio “Odishi + “;</li> <li>✍ Radio “Atinati”;</li> <li>✍ Newspaper “Zugdidi”;</li> <li>✍ Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regional community and political newspaper – “Egrisi Matsne”;</li> <li>✍ ZSSU TV at the Shota Meskhia State Teaching University.</li> </ul>
17	Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Association “Atinati”;</li> <li>✍ Zugdidi City Hall Department of Transport;</li> <li>✍ LTD “Margi Dizaini”;</li> </ul>
18	Gastronomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ GNTA;</li> <li>✍ Samegrelo DMO;</li> <li>✍ Georgian Culinary Federation;</li> <li>✍ Georgian Gastronomy Association</li> <li>✍ Ethno-village “Sisa Tura”;</li> <li>✍ House of folklore “Beso Chitinava”;</li> <li>✍ Agricultural cooperative “Tapli Kolkhuri”;</li> <li>✍ “Youth for development of Samegrelo – social café “Mego-bari”;</li> <li>✍ Family hotel “Casa de Khasia”;</li> <li>✍ Restaurant “Diaroni”;</li> <li>✍ Restaurant “Ak dadian”;</li> <li>✍ Candied/dried vegetables “Kopeshoni”;</li> <li>✍ Enterprise “Skiri”;</li> <li>✍ Restaurant “Samepo”;</li> <li>✍ Hotel “Iberia Palace”;</li> <li>✍ Family hotel “Tbili Sakhli”;</li> <li>✍ Family hotel “Mtsvane Sakhli”;</li> <li>✍ Café “Leo Doro”;</li> <li>✍ Restaurant “Bermukha”;</li> <li>✍ Hotel “Grand Hotel”;</li> <li>✍ Hotel “Lotus”;</li> <li>✍ Hotel LETO</li> </ul>
19	Cultural Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ GNTA;</li> <li>✍ Samegrelo DMO;</li> <li>✍ Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth;</li> <li>✍ Ministry of Economy and Sustainable development;</li> <li>✍ Young Scouts;</li> <li>✍ Ethno-village “Sisa Tura”;</li> <li>✍ House of Folklore “Beso Chitinava”;</li> <li>✍ Agricultural cooperative “Tapli Kolkhuri”;</li> <li>✍ “Youth for development of Samegrelo – social café “Mego-bari”;</li> <li>✍ Family hotel “Casa de Khasia”.</li> </ul>

20	Parks and Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure;</li> <li>✍ Zugdidi municipality “Centre for Management of Botanical Gardens”;</li> <li>✍ Zugdidi central park (So called “Skate Park”);</li> <li>✍ Zugdidi European Park (So called “French park”);</li> <li>✍ Zugdidi XIX century Central Boulevard;</li> <li>✍ April 9 Square;</li> <li>✍ Iona Meunargia square;</li> <li>✍ Ganmukhuri boulevard and aqua-park;</li> <li>✍ Anaklia resting park;</li> <li>✍ “Emigrant Park” in village October;</li> <li>✍ Zugdidi veteran alley and square;</li> <li>✍ Emigrant garden “Pesvebi”.</li> </ul>
21	Non-governmental organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Georgian gastronomy association;</li> <li>✍ Ceramics workshop “Orkolstudio”;</li> <li>✍ Ethno-village “Sisa Tura”;</li> <li>✍ House of folklore;</li> <li>✍ Association “Atinati”;</li> <li>✍ Association “Mercury”;</li> <li>✍ Social Café “Mego-bari”;</li> <li>✍ B612 Book lovers’ club;</li> <li>✍ American Corner</li> <li>✍ PIP Peace institute for progress (PIP)</li> </ul>



# Summary of Main Pillars of CDS



## Chapter 8

Photo: "Lazic Balcony" a fragment of the unique Laz ceiling of the Queen's Palace. XIX century  
Photographer: Nukri Berulava

An ultimate objective of Zugdidi CDS is to raise awareness of the population regarding the intrinsic value and the true potential of culture and creative industries as drivers of economic and social development as well as to create an enabling and supportive environment for the development of CCI sector thus contributing to stimulating and catalysing positive long-lasting changes.

In terms of **cultural value**, CDS contributes to the in-depth study and analysis of creative and cultural needs and challenges as well as highlights the genuine potential of the city and all relevant actors; It helps form a clear vision for consistent development, through evidence-based, concrete and targeted actions/interventions. A long-term strategic vision will allow us to create an enabling environment for the development of arts, culture and creative industries, which in turn, will help us tackle the city's social and economic challenges through creative and innovative approaches.

The main vision of our CDS is centred on local distinctiveness and on people. The strategy highlights and defines the true potential and role of culture and art in the development of the city and local community development. A prerequisite for this was the development of the document itself – a process, that was inclusive, transparent, and participatory. Particular emphasis is placed on issues of multi-ethnic, gender, multicultural, and inclusive participation.

CDS aims to transform Zugdidi into a **cultural hub, a creative city** and highlight as well as promote its significant role in the overall cultural life of the country. This is even more important due to the fact that the capital city Tbilisi is the epicentre of major cultural events, which, to a certain extent, overshadows and hinders the role of the regions.

In terms of **economic value**, both - the strategy development process and the document itself focus on demonstrating economic value and true potential of cultural and creative industries as well as diverse opportunities for further creative and innovative economic development of the city and job creation. Numerous international studies prove that culture and creativity have a transversal role and a spill-over effect being the catalyst and a driver for the economic development of countries.

The cultural development strategy focuses on supporting production and proper showcasing of the value of cultural product and services offered by independent artists, cultural actors and most importantly, by local communities. It provides solutions for increasing its attractiveness and demand, helps expand the market and thus, transforms it into a profitable and economically beneficial resource, additional income for local community. A genuine, authentic local cultural product will promote the city's creative nature as well as its overall image at the local, regional and international levels and create a prerequisite for the city's sustainable economic development as well as stimulate job creation.

The economic effect of the strategy will also be more efficient and purposeful for a proper planning and management of the local budget, which will lead to more targeted and rational distribution of state resources; support commercialization of the cultural sector, which will stimulate local entrepreneurship development, as well as diversification of incomes and accumulation of local and central budget revenues.

In terms of **environmental value**, the cultural development strategy allows us to clearly outline the challenges that the local climate, environment, ecology and natural resources are facing and their impact on cultural, especially urban, as well as cultural and natural heritage landscape and condition. This is especially important as climate change, global warming and other natural cataclysms, put protection, preservation and conservation of natural and cultural (both tangible and intangible) heritage at high risk.

The cultural development strategy also contributes to the proper urban development of the city. By acknowledging and integrating modern approaches and trends (e.g., Baukultur, a European Green Deal, etc.), we will be able to plan city development with a special emphasis on cultural landscape and the well-being of the local population.

In terms of **social value**, CDS focuses on acknowledging, identifying and solving the social challenges that the population of Zugdidi is facing, through creative and innovative approaches. The strategy implementation process will be based on transparency and inclusiveness, which will help to lead a broader public discussion, consolidate the community, strengthen a participatory spirit and identify common ways to tackle existing challenges. By identifying and introducing creative approaches, it will be possible, from a social point of view, to address issues facing the community agenda, using culture and creativity.

Cultural participation has a much more profound relation to individual choices and behaviours that is commonly believed, and better understanding them offers us a useful guide to design and assess policy interventions aimed at boosting the post-pandemic recovery of our economies and societies.

Special attention is paid to the gender related aspects and respect in all actions envisaged by the strategy as well as to the active engagement and empowering of IDPs, ethnic, religious and other minorities, as well as people with disabilities.

Strategy contributes to promoting and enhancing European identity, culture and values as well as strengthen social cohesion.

In terms of **political value**, our overall objective will be to depoliticize and decentralize the culture and arts sector. In this regard, special instruments and methods aiming at increasing the participation of the local population in the decision-making process, are introduced.

Special attention is paid to highlighting the potential and role of arts, culture and creative industries in other related strategies and action plans elaborated by various public institutions at local, regional and national levels.

In terms of institutional value, the strategy contributes to increasing capacities of personnel working within the municipality as well as municipal cultural institutions. It will play the role of the catalyst to reforming the current system of cultural management and funding. There is a need for a transition to a forward-looking European-style management and funding system. The core of such a reform focuses on moving to de-centralized, arm's length mechanisms and disbursing cultural funding and awarding grants.

In terms of strengthening networking and cooperation, CDS is oriented towards human capital and audience development, increasing the local community engagement in cultural processes, promotion of cooperation and partnerships, improvement of culture management and support, creation of creative spaces, and in general, popularization and internationalization of Zugdidi. A key direction in Zugdidi's CDS, is stimulation of active partnership of all stakeholders: public, private, educational, academic, scientific, non-governmental. For this purpose, measures to stimulate collaborations and partnerships as well as establishment of various cooperation platforms is envisaged.

Communication and cooperation between various sectors and actors are a prerequisite for development. Cooperation networks allow for conduct of wide-scale projects and awareness campaigns, which help increase population engagement and lobbying for sectoral interests. All the aforementioned can be achieved via the implementation of various activities, e.g.,

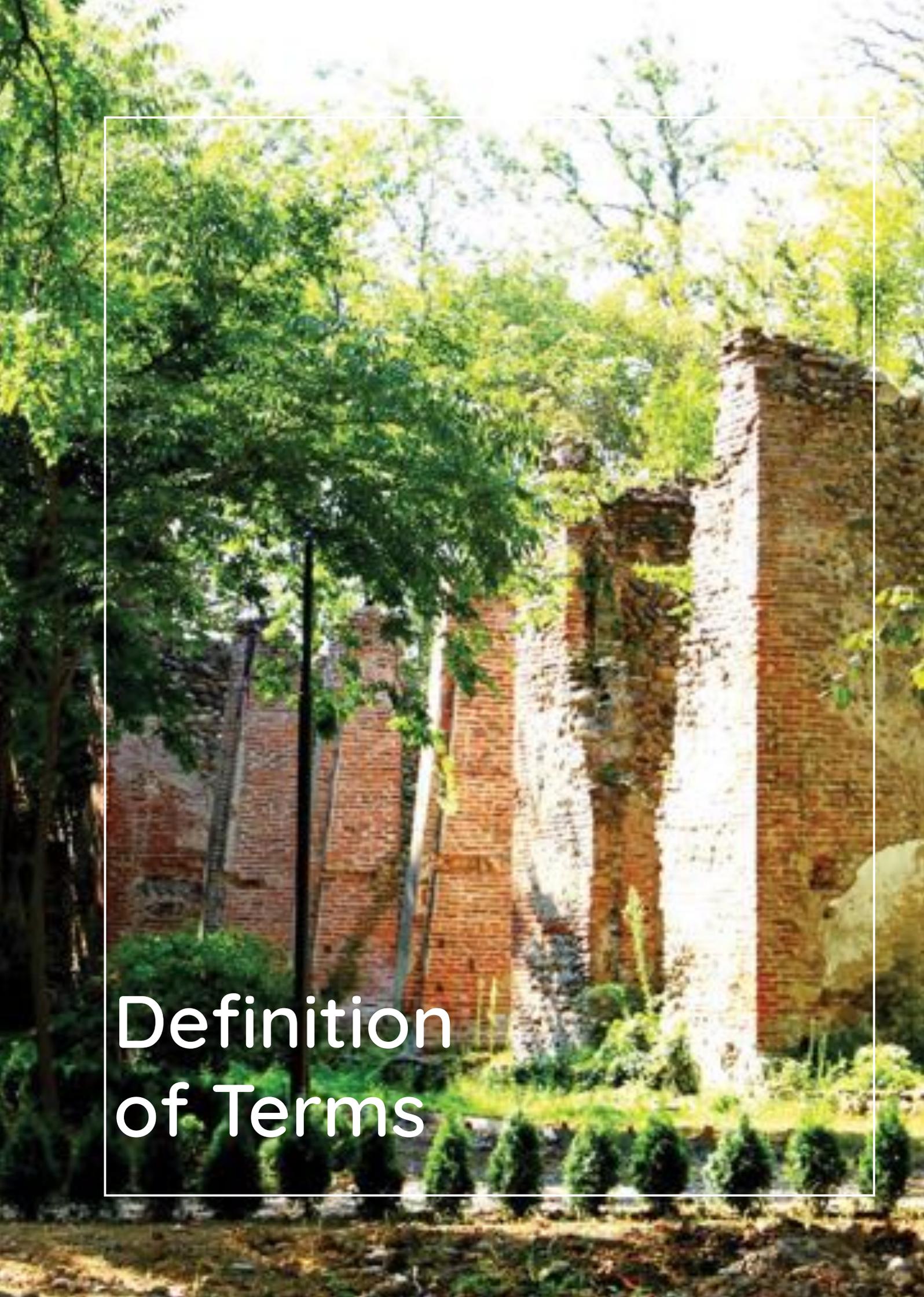
organizing the conceptual festivals, which would promote not just one sector, but will enliven cultural life in Zugdidi, popularize and demonstrate its attractiveness at the local, regional, and international levels; allow artists from various fields to promote, popularize and sell their creative products, etc.;

In terms of communication and dissemination, CDS acknowledges special importance to ensuring that culture be accessible to all members of the community. At all stages of support, planning and organization of cultural events and activities, special attention will be paid to the awareness and involvement of all interested stakeholders, especially youth, women, elderly, IDPs, persons with disabilities and minorities.

For effective promotion of Zugdidi cultural assets, digital technologies play an important role, as their usage could allow for the establishment of new digital services, which is also related to the creation of new jobs. All the aforementioned creates an endless chain of sustainability, which is oriented toward the development of the cultural sector, as well as at well-being and success of the municipality population.



Photo: "Dadiani Palace and the defence wall. Synthesis of European and Oriental style. View from "French Park"  
Photographer: Elguja Khubutia



# Definition of Terms

**Informal education** – any planned and voluntary program of individual or social education, that is not a part of formal educational program and aims to develop competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes).

**Intangible cultural heritage** – according to UNESCO, in case of community, specific groups and sometimes, even individuals – their customs, ways of presenting and depicting, skills and habits, as well as the instruments, tools, artefacts and cultural spaces, that could be considered their cultural heritage. Fields of intangible cultural heritage are: oral traditions and ways of interpretation (legend, fable, oral tale, lore, etc.), performative arts (song, dance, acting, etc.), communal practices (games, birthdays, holidays, culinary, etc.), experience with environment (folk medicine, customs associated with nature, etc.), crafts and techniques (folk handicrafts: felting, metal, clay, rug, etc.).

**Accelerator** – Special program/process, that aims to help start-up, starting or small enterprises with developing a business plan, creating a quality and requested product and/or service, accessing local markets, identifying potential customers and attracting investments.

**Good governance** – concept of public government, that is characterized by: civil engagement, orientation no consensus, protecting the rule of law, effectiveness and efficacy, responsibility, transparency, responsiveness, impartiality and inclusivity (UN definition).

**Cultural asset** – Something valuable for the specific population, community or a group, due to its unique role in this community's cultural, artistic, creative, economic, historical and/or social depictions and structure. Cultural assets may be tangible, such as heritage or cultural objects and products. Intangible cultural assets may include events, activities, experiences, knowledge of society and culture and language.

**Cultural landscape** – human or human and nature construct, as well as an area of significant architecture, which represents a universal value, from historical, aesthetical, ethnic and anthropology standpoints and requires a synergy of spatial development, city-building, environmental protection, monument preservation and cultural strategies, for establishment of a specific protective regime. Nowadays the term also implies the city landscape, as well as the landscapes derived via industrial and other enterprise activities, theatrical and museum landscapes, etc. (UNESCO 1972 convention on World Culture and Natural heritage protection, Paris; European Union 2000 so-called European convention on landscapes, Florence).

**Cultural diversity** – According to the UNESCO definition, cultural diversity is a combination of mental, material, intellectual and emotional properties specific to various parts of the community or social groups. The term also implies the coexistence of people with differing lifestyles, value systems, traditions, religion and faith.

**Cultural resource** – various elements, that serve the development of culture and creativity unique to a place. Resources may be human, natural, social, economic or constructed. Examples of cultural resources are: art and media activities and institutions; local human, natural and cultural heritage; creative and cultural enterprises; festivals and events; youth culture and way of life; diversity of a local community; universities and private sector research centres; repertoire of local goods and skills in crafts, manufacturing and services; natural and man-made environment.

**Sustainable development goals** – new agenda of world developments consists of 17 global goals, that are used to define priorities for 15 years, from 2016 to 2030. Sustainable development goals offer a universal agenda, which will balance out the three dimensions of development – environmental protection, social and economic fields.

**FabLab** – fabrication laboratory – a space outfitted with specific, flexible and programmable equipment, which aims to create “almost anything”, using various materials and hardware complexes. FabLab is also a platform for teaching and innovations: place to play, create, learn, mentor and invent.

**Umbrella organization** – An umbrella organization is an association of institutions who work together formally to coordinate activities and/or pool resources. In business, political, and other environments, it provides resources and often identities to the smaller organizations.

**Creative industries** – Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.

**Creative incubator** – new, but growing, phenomena in the world of local arts agencies. They are facilities that create a nurturing environment for small and emerging arts organizations by offering low-cost or subsidized space and services.

**Creative Cluster** – A creative cluster includes non-profit enterprises, cultural institutions, arts venues and individual artists alongside the science park and the media centre. Creative clusters are places to live as well as to work, places where cultural products are consumed as well as made.

**Creative Hub** – A Creative Hub is a place, either physical or virtual, which brings creative people together. It is a convenor, providing space and support for networking, business development and community engagement within the creative, cultural and tech sectors.



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