Cultural Sector Rescue Plan to respond to the COVID-19 crisis
The COVID-19 pandemic has created a global health emergency that is affecting our entire economy, and the cultural sector in particular, which has been obliged to halt all activity as a result. The first wave of repercussions saw the suspension of public events; the closing of cinemas, theatres and cultural facilities of all kinds, such as museums, monuments, libraries and archives; the suspension of courses, seminars and conferences; the cancellation of performances, fairs and festivals, and the postponement of one of the region’s most emblematic festivals: St Jordi Day, thereby seriously impacting one of our cultural sector’s strongest areas, that of books and publishing.

The majority of the measures implemented to control the pandemic are based on public confinement and social distancing, directly impacting most of the sector’s activity, which, as well as being one of the first to be forced to close, is certain to be one of the last to return to normality. This, paradoxically, stands in stark contrast to the fact that culture has and continues to play a key part in helping people get through these difficult times by being able to enjoy books, music, videos and the numerous cultural initiatives on social media, often generously made available by those that have created them.

It is within this context, and with the aim of mitigating and minimising the economic repercussions of this pandemic within the cultural sector, that the Government of Catalonia has made a firm commitment to implement a Rescue Plan which includes a series of measures to protect the cultural fabric of society and provide all the necessary support to ensure that cultural activities are able to resume as quickly as possible once the health crisis is over.

This Cultural Sector Rescue Plan responds to the main requirements identified by the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Catalonia and based on the input of numerous cultural stakeholders (associations, public organisations, facilities, unions, business entities, etc.) and focuses on four main goals:

- Supporting the cultural sector during the crisis.
- Establishing measures and mechanisms to ensure that the impact of the crisis does not cause irreparable damage to the cultural fabric of society.
- Preparing the sector for a speedy resumption of activity insofar as the health and social conditions allow.
- Restructuring the budget in order to fulfil these goals.
1. Measures of support for the cultural sector

Ongoing contact with representatives from all cultural sectors is a key measure being implemented at this time in order to ascertain their requirements and proposals and enable the development of targeted actions aimed at protecting the cultural fabric of society during the crisis, as well as in the immediate resumption of activity once it is over. To that end, the following actions are being undertaken:

- **Meetings are being held with different representatives at the highest level**
  Videoconference meetings involving the various subsectors are being held in order to communicate the measures being implemented by the Ministry, ascertain the requirements of the relevant entities and gather their proposals.

The programme of meetings opened with a meeting chaired by the President of the Government of Catalonia and the Minister for Culture and including the main representatives of each cultural sector. A report outlining the "20 Extraordinary Measures to Protect the Cultural Sector" was presented at this meeting before subsequently being submitted to the Government.

Following this initial meeting, the Minister and Ministry management team have held a series of meetings (still ongoing), with each of the following sectors:  
   o Actua Cultura  
   o Major cultural facilities  
   o Heritage sector  
   o National museums  
   o Popular culture  
   o Performing arts and music  
   o Book sector

Meetings are being held on a daily basis to ascertain the requirements and opinions of the different stakeholders within the sector, as well as with the other government administrations.

- **Open email with management teams**
  Creation of an email account to handle all queries related to the Rescue Plan: [suportalacultura@gencat.cat](mailto:suportalacultura@gencat.cat), to which representatives of the sectors are able to direct any requests, queries, complaints and suggestions and efforts will be made to provide answers.

- **Creation of an internet portal for the Cultural Sector Rescue Plan**
  The portal aims to provide access to services and resources for citizens, creators, companies, entities and public and private cultural schedulers. To that end, we are providing:

   1. All the requests sent to us by the cultural sectors:  
      1. Catalan Academy of Music  
      2. Catalan Professional Dance Association
3. Professional Catalan performing arts associations
4. Catalan Chamber of Commerce for Books (CLC)
5. Catalunya Film Festivals
6. ConArte-aadpc (Confederation of Working Performance Artists – Catalan Professional Actors and Directors Association)
7. Crac (Catalan Professional Conservation and Restoration Association)

This list is regularly updated on the Rescue Plan website.

2. The following is a list of all the measures being implemented by the government administrations: Government of Catalonia, provincial councils and local administrations, particularly Barcelona City Council.

3. Data and indicators for monitoring the Rescue Plan
   a. Structural economic and employment data
   b. Sectoral economic, employment and activity data
   c. Measure implementation monitoring (under development)

http://cultura.gencat.cat/plarescat/
2. Priority: the rescue of the cultural sector

The Government of Catalonia’s first priority has been to ensure the health and integrity of all those who work in the various different fields in the cultural sector, as well as the show audiences, facilities and events that constituted the majority of the cultural programme.

Once these measures have been implemented and progress made in bringing the pandemic under control, further efforts need to be made to, as far as possible, avoid the employment, business, institutional and creative fabric of the cultural world being irreparably damaged and establish the foundations and mechanisms for rapid and positive recovery.

To that end, the Ministry is focusing efforts on the following areas of activity:

- **The comprehensive restructuring of the budget in order to prioritise the resumption of activity**
  The 2020 budget, which has been submitted to Parliament, despite not providing for all the cultural sector’s aspirations, did include some significant improvements with regard to the extended 2017 budget. Obviously, the provisions did not include specific measures to respond to this crisis, which did not feature on any agenda just a few weeks earlier.

  The Ministry of Culture is working to establish the necessary mechanisms so that, once the budget has been approved, the initial consignments can be modified to address the sector rescue policies established in this plan. This objective requires budget allocations, areas of work and programmes to be modified and efforts and resources to be redirected to address the new requirements posed by the health and social emergency. Details of this task are provided in Section 4 of this Rescue Plan.

- **Development and promotion of a package of regulatory measures to adapt the lines of funding to the crisis situation**
    - Chapter II. Exceptional measures in relation to subsidies and, where appropriate, grants. **Relaxation of the rules governing subsidies and common administrative procedure corresponding to the terms of regulatory conditions and tenders.**
  - **Royal Decree Law 10/2020, of 27 March**, which establishes new extraordinary measures to address the health, economic and social impact of COVID-19.
    - Second additional provision. **Cultural events of international relevance, scope or nature are eligible to claim force majeure.**
These regulatory changes have facilitated the following:

a. In relation to subsidies and financial instruments awarded prior to the state of emergency:

- Subsidies awarded in 2020 or before, in the event that the grant justification period is still in force, will not be revoked as a result of failing to fulfil the objectives established for the relevant activity for which the grant was awarded.

- No minimum percentage of expenditure realised and justified will be required from the subsidiary beneficiaries with respect to the total cost of the relevant subsidised activity.

- The deadlines established for carrying out the activity or justification of the subsidies awarded will be extended so that, in agreement with the designated bodies of the awarding entities, the relevant subsidised objective may be achieved.

b. In relation to subsidies and financial instruments in the form of non-refundable contributions tendered prior to the state of emergency being declared but with awards still pending:

- The reformulation of the conditions for regulating lines of funding is permitted, providing not only for the reduction in the subsidised sum forecast by the Ministry of Culture, but also that of other possible sources of funding.

- Relaxation of the deadlines and conditions of repayment of refundable contributions (financial assistance, in the form of co-financing, which are facilitated via the dual mode of grants and loans).

- Increase the advance payment percentage of all subsidies by 10%, with the aim of providing a cash flow injection for the companies and beneficiary entities.

- Funding measures. Development and promotion of a package of measures to facilitate credit and liquidity in the cultural sector

- Line of funding amounting to €10 million promoted by the Catalan Institute for Cultural Companies (ICEC) and the ICF, entitled ICF Culture Liquidity, developed to cover the liquidity requirements of entities and businesses operating in the cultural sector.

- In addition, work is also under way to create a line of funding to finance the interest resulting from the first year grace period on the loans mentioned in the previous point.

- New specific lines of funding to respond to the crisis

Relevant conditions are currently being finalised to open new lines of funding to provide specific support to the cultural fabric adversely affected by the obligatory suspension of activity resulting from the lockdown measures, both for companies and other entities in the sector:

- Grants to compensate for losses and damages. To offset the structural costs incurred by the entities despite the cessation of activities. OSIC
- Grants to offset the reduction in revenue resulting from the cancellation of cultural shows during the COVID-19 state of emergency period. Compensating for lost booking fees, ticket office revenue and cancelled bookings. OSIC

- Line of compensation to mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. ICEC

The budget allocation for these new lines of funding will be covered by the budgetary increases already applied in 2020, subject to the approval of the 2020 budget.

- **Publication and modification of conditions for subsidies for the promotion of activity and the management of cancelled activities that cannot be rescheduled**

  o New tender and awarding conditions have been approved in relation to grants for the various cultural sectors, including the visual arts, dance, circus, theatre, performing arts and music, as well as scholarships for research and innovation, and also for training.

  These tenders have been approved with a term that is subject to the lifting of the state of emergency and will be published as soon as the situation returns to normality so as not to prejudice potential applicants.

  o Measures being implemented in relation to lines of funding (in coordination with the provincial councils corresponding to SPEEM theatres):
    - Modifications to the Program.cat conditions to facilitate the rescheduling of activities: reducing minimum requirements, permitting Festa Major scheduling, etc. The proposal is being developed.
    - Relaxation of the justifications for the multiyear E3 agreements.
    - Relaxation of the justifications for Visual Arts Centre agreements.

  o In the event of cancellation in any of the strategic markets or of other cultural activities that cannot be rescheduled, the contribution made by the Ministry of Culture will be guaranteed in order to avoid additional hardship for the contracted companies – with Catalan companies taking priority – mitigating any loss of bookings and the impact on event employees and external suppliers.

  o Analysis and application of compensatory measures for the booking of scheduled artists within these markets, using 2019 bookings as a comparative parameter.

- **Measures corresponding to public libraries**

  o Reinforcement of the line of funding for the purchase of books by the Government of Catalonia Library Service. Maintenance of the SAB procurement schedule to help minimise the impact of COVID-19 on the book sector. €2.2 million for the Library Acquisition System so that libraries are able to purchase new Catalan language titles from publishers. Process under way.

  o Purchasing: €1.7 million in city and town council subsidies for the purchase of books and newspapers from bookshops.
Construction and renovation of libraries: €6.5 million in municipal grants for the construction and renovation of libraries. These have already been awarded and the municipalities will receive the first 10% this year. The freeze applied to justification periods will protect them against the adverse effects of any potential delays to the public works.

Many of these measures corresponding to the libraries area have already begun to be rolled out in the past week.

- **Measures corresponding to entities affiliated with the Ministry of Culture**
  - With respect to the entities affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, advance payments of transfers and subsidies will be carried out to enable them to maintain full employment and ensure sufficient liquidity to cover financial commitments.

- **Development and promotion of measures to promote culture**
  - Support the celebration of a memorable Day of Books and Roses once the evolution of the pandemic allows, and in agreement with all the stakeholders and sectors involved. It will act as a symbol of the resumption of normality and a new stage in which culture needs to play a crucial role.
    - Support for book sector initiatives to promote books on St. Jordi Day and promotion of celebratory events during lockdown.
  - Support for all the initiatives in the world of culture aimed at supporting citizens confined to their homes during this period, with recommendations for lectures, concerts and performances of all kinds (audiovisual materials, musicals, debates, games, etc.) on social media and the internet. The Ministry is providing the sector with access to its resources, such as the Cultural Agenda and the hashtag #joproposo.
  - Development of a programme of activities to promote the consumption of cultural content on the internet. This programme would include, among other activities, the promotion of reading, visiting and/or consulting archives, museums, sites, monuments and other heritage sites, as well as the consumption of music and performing arts content or any other form of cultural expression in digital format.

- **Language**
  - Range of telematic services to facilitate learning, improving and promoting the Catalan language during the pandemic lockdown.
  - More than 8,500 people are learning Catalan online during the health emergency.
  - The TERMCAT Terminology Centre has developed a new online dictionary for ‘Coronavirus terms’ listing terminology related to the health crisis.
- Digital libraries
  o Inclusion of new catalogues of films, comics, newspapers and educational resources to further expand the range of resources already available through the eBiblioCat digital library.
  o At present, anyone residing in Catalonia has access to more than 100,000 documents of all types: e-books and magazines, encyclopaedias, films, music, audiobooks and educational resources.
  o Since the lockdown began, 45,671 documents of all types have been loaned out and an average of 150 inquiries are being received via email and social media on a daily basis.
  o e-Library: €120,000 increase in the Ministry of Culture budget for the purchase of e-book titles and licenses for the eBiblio online library in order to meet current eBiblio demand, which has exceeded 500%.
  o Reading bundles for those confined in collective facilities: issue of reading bundles for those individuals in lockdown at collective facilities. These requests are being addressed using Library Loans Hub (CePSE) funds.

- Activities to promote reading
  o ‘Llegir té premi’ reading competition (Legiland platform): unlimited access (as long as there is a library that is managing the group).
  o Write a book (Fiction Express platform): unlimited access (as long as there is a library that is managing the group).
  o Virtual reading clubs (Tellfy platform): the platform does not constitute a cost for the Ministry as it is a CTTI Innovation project. The Ministry is responsible for contracting the club leaders.
  o Supernit: the decision has been made together with TV3 to postpone the celebration scheduled for 22 May.
  o The Ministry of Culture's Institute of Catalan Literature (ILC) is incorporating a virtual mode into the Lletres a las Aules (Literature in the Classroom) and Lletres en Viu (Live Literature) programmes, which organise author visits to schools and library reading clubs, respectively.

- Museums, archives and heritage
  o The Ministry of Culture is working on specific measures for museums, such as the advance payment of contributions to consortiums in order to ensure the fulfilment of financial commitments.
  o The Ministry is preparing a short questionnaire to evaluate impact and measures implemented in response to the SARS-CoV-2 virus in museums in Catalonia.
  o The deadline for taking part in the "International Heritage Photography Experience #EFIM20" Instagram contest for young people has been extended. Due to the lockdown, participants will have until 10 May to register and until 24 May to post their photos.
Together with the Ministry for Digital Policy and Public Administration, the Ministry of Culture is in the process of developing recommendations for the management of documents during the crisis.

"Archive the Moment" project. The project is leading the drive for the systematic collection of images and information, lockdown diaries, oral memories, and digital recording of events.

- **Visual arts**
  
o A resource allocation has been agreed for the purchase of artwork by living artists (amount pending) and the commission of work from professional photographers as part of the "Archive the Moment" programme.

- **Popular culture and associations**
  
o Maintenance of the lines of funding and changes to the admission criteria to adapt to the crisis situation.

### 3. Planning for resumption of activity and recovery in the cultural sector

Work is currently being carried out to develop a schedule of all the tasks that need to be implemented to resume activity. This area of work is already being progressively developed in conjunction with a number of teams and will, as a minimum, need to include the following:

- A programme for the lifting of quarantine measures and a progressive return to activity
- A programme to promote activity and reactivate the sector
- An audience and communication plan for the resumption of activity

Work is currently being carried out on all these programmes and they will be further developed as the end to the lockdown period becomes clearer, with a gradual return to activity and normality. These steps do, however, need to be well planned in accordance with the relevant sectors and scheduled following the guidelines established by the health authorities.

- **A programme for the lifting of quarantine measures and a progressive return to activity**

The health authorities have already begun work on defining the phases for the progressive lifting of the lockdown measures. Work is being done to define the steps that need to be implemented in the different types of cultural facilities and services and the protection measures and schedules that will need to be established in each case to comply with that established.

The Ministry of Culture, in line with the instructions set out by PROCICAT, will publish the lockdown exit strategies that affect the cultural sectors and collaborate in the development of relevant measures.
- A programme to promote activity and reactivate the sector

Once the actions related to the rescue of the cultural sector have been implemented, the Ministry will launch actions aimed at resuming activity, prioritising those actions or lines of funding aimed at the generation of activity and return to normality and which, ultimately, generate additional value for people working in the culture sector and help to once more strengthen its businesses and entities.

- An audience and communication plan for the resumption of activity

In parallel, and also with the aim of promoting a speedy return to activity, a package of actions will be developed aimed at promoting the general public’s return to cultural events, promoting consumption, and the battle against piracy and support for online communication campaigns and actions that correspond to the aforementioned objectives.

4. Financial planning for the Rescue Plan

The Ministry of Culture is basing its calculations on the budget presented for 2020, which included a non-final, non-financial total expenditure of €314.8 million. The comprehensive restructuring of each allocation for the Ministry’s various different areas has been necessary in order to fulfil the commitments set out in this Rescue Plan, as well as those being developed for the resumption of activity phase.

The priorities, as specified at the start of this document, are aimed at addressing the needs of the people, the companies and entities that make up the cultural fabric of our society and, as a result, certain initiatives and projects have had to be abandoned that, despite being important, do not correspond to a context of crisis and emergency like the one currently being experienced. The procedural schedules have also been, and will continue to be, adapted to ensure, as far as possible, the liquidity of the sector’s different entities.

The Rescue Plan is an active document and, as such, the various action packages, whether they address the rescue or resumption of activity, will be rolled out in waves that will be adapted to the different situations generated by the evolution of the crisis.

- First wave of economic measures

The first wave of measures focuses on actions aimed at ensuring the liquidity of facilities, companies, entities and freelancers, either through loans or non-refundable grants to cover damages and losses caused by the crisis or to offset the impact of cancellations.

Certain lines of funding have also been streamlined to enable libraries to make advance book purchases to support the book sector. In subsequent waves, lines of support and direct promotional actions will be promoted for the different sectors.
First wave

Summary of the main financial actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICEC ICF Culture loans</td>
<td>€10 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquidity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Liquidity line of funding subsidised interest</td>
<td>€350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants to compensate for damages and losses OSIC</td>
<td>€3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants to compensate for the loss of revenue as a result of cancellation, OSIC</td>
<td>€2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICEC line of compensation to offset the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic</td>
<td>€8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance purchase of books and rights for libraries</td>
<td>€4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraordinary contributions for facilities to respond to the crisis</td>
<td>€4 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main actions of this first wave of actions represent a mobilisation of resources amounting to roughly €31 million.

Much of the rest of the proposed actions are covered by ordinary budgetary allocations.

In the coming days, new packages of measures will be developed and resources allocated from the restructured budget.

14 April 2020