

LITHUANIAN
COUNCIL FOR
CULTURE

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The impact of art residencies

Initiated by the
Lithuanian Council for Culture

Research conducted
by Xwhy / Agency of Understanding

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The research was conducted at the initiative of the Lithuanian Council for Culture (LCC). Research supervision working group: Kristina Mažeikaitė, Martynas Tininis, Mindaugas Bundza, Rūta Kriaučiūnaitė-Mincė. Executed by a team of Xwhy researchers and experts.

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The research objective

The research objective is to assess the impact of art residencies in the Republic of Lithuania on the artist/creator, environment, and other factors and to provide recommendations for successfully implementing Lithuanian art residencies and the Culture Support Fund-funded program “Art residencies of Artists and Cultural Creators in Lithuania” (hereinafter – the Program).

Art residencies differ in their nature, purposes, fields of art, target audience, and other aspects, but one of the most common denominators is that they facilitate the mobility of artists and allow them to engage

in creativity for some time in an alternative space other than their own. Incoming residents from other locations are a prerequisite for art residency.

Residencies provide “soft” and “hard” infrastructures.

Soft infrastructure	Hard infrastructure
It helps the artist to acquire the necessary competencies, to raise their qualification and the quality of their production.	All the physical spaces that provide opportunities for the development of artists, allow them to exhibit, publicize their works of art, work, and so on.
Soft and hard infrastructures often are both present in art residencies – they provide opportunities for artists to improve their professional qualifications, network, expand the range of their work and thinking, at the same time they create space and time for the creation process.	

Mobility and networking are an integral part of successful artists' careers.



Key features of art residencies:

- mobility of artists;
- creation in another or in a virtual environment;
- inclusion into the local context;
- creating conditions to get to know local identity;
- providing opportunities for collaboration with other cultural and artistic creators.



Necessary criteria to be met:

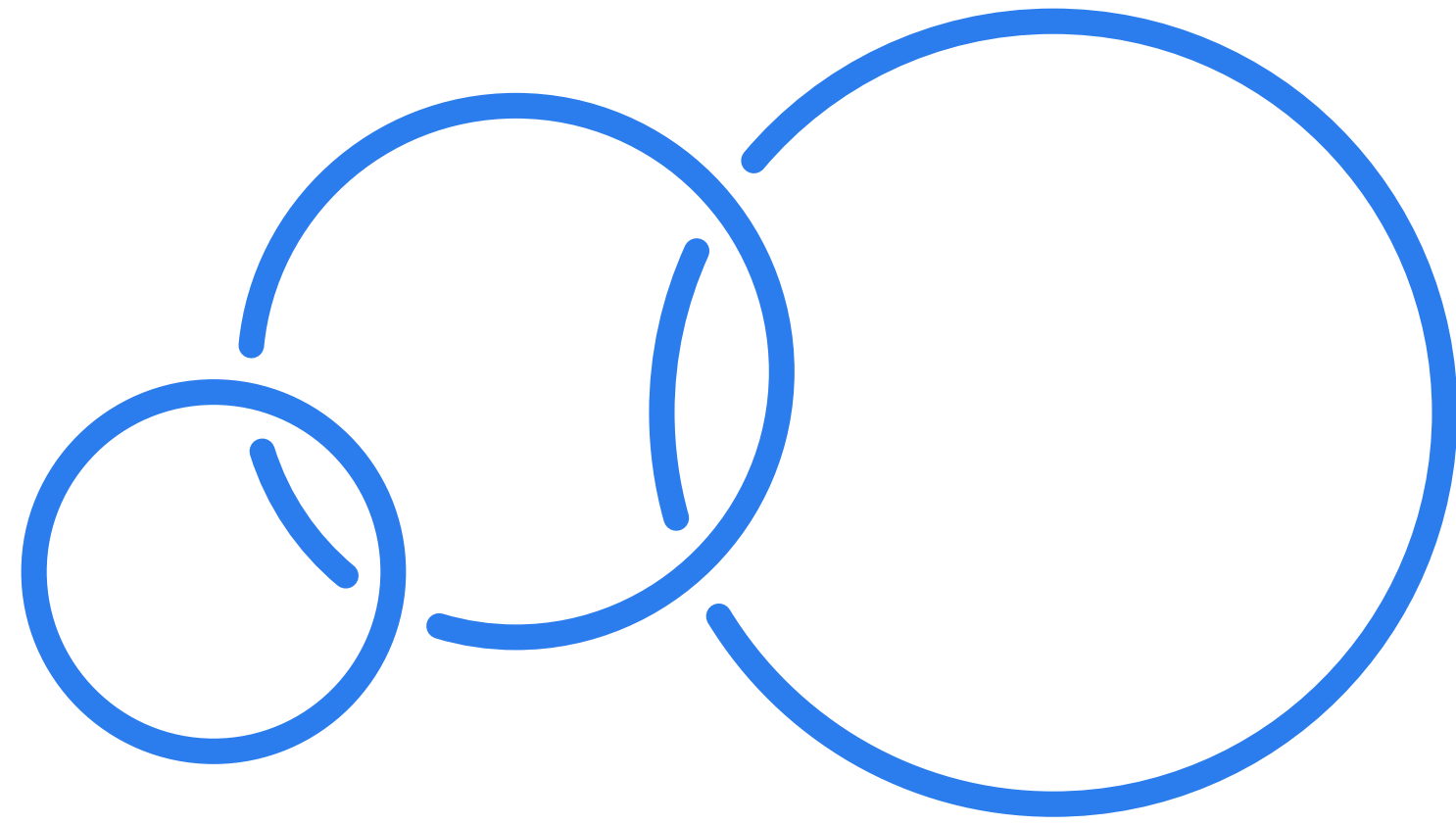
Necessary and additional criteria for residencies have been revealed (for a residency to be considered as an art residency):

- description of residency;
- infrastructure;
- publicity;
- transparency;
- sustainability.

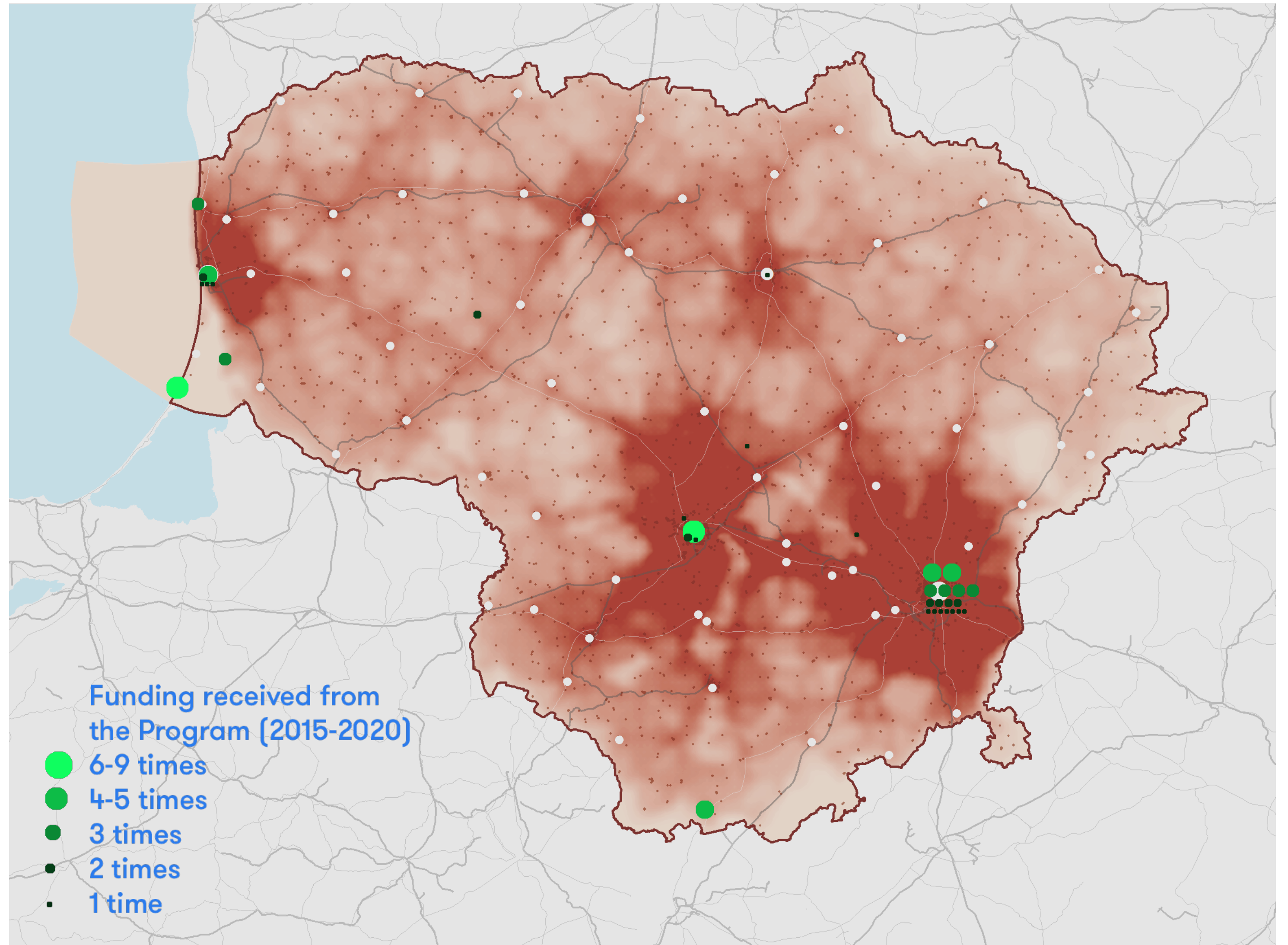


Additional criteria for residencies:

- art residency as a main activity;
- employing coordinator;
- attracting foreign artists;
- organizing educational activities;
- involving the (local) community;
- initiating dialogue between artists.



Art residencies are most active around the three largest urban centers – Vilnius, Kaunas, and Klaipėda.



ANNEX No 1. Impact cards used during the workshops

Impact on the artists

Personal development of artists	Generating ideas	Increased self-confidence
Involvement of artists, networking	Combining local and global perspectives	Mobility opportunities
Meetings with strangers	Productivity	Intercultural understanding
Professional development of artists	Combining different disciplines	An opportunity to make a living from creativity
Dissemination of artworks and recognition raising	Tools and space to create	Opportunity to work with authorities
Separation from the outside world		

ANNEX No 1. Impact cards used during the workshops

Impact on the environment

Local identity development / creation	Improving the access to culture	Ecological ideas for the place
Involvement of the local community in creativity	Revitalization of non-traditional sites	Dialogue is encouraged
Partnership with local businesses, organizations, etc.	Solving local social problems	Infrastructure is being developed
High-quality works of art are created	Promoting tolerance	Involvement of vulnerable groups
Job creation	Attracting visitors	Attracting investment
Improving the living environment	Activating public spaces	Promotion of tourism
Community cultural education	Increasing the attractiveness of the place	Provision of cultural services

Choices of creative workshop participants highlighting the most important areas of impact:

62% were dedicated to the impact on artists;

38% were dedicated to the impact on the environment.

Chosen by the workshop participants, these are the most important aspects of the impact on the artists:

- tools and space to create;
- involvement of artists, networking;
- combining local and global perspectives;
- dissemination of artworks and recognition raising.

The participants during workshops discussed the need to focus more on young artists, thus it was expressed that stronger collaborations between art residencies, universities, and academies would provide the first much needed impetus at the beginning of a career.

The types of impact on the environment identified during the workshops can be divided into two groups:

- positive impact on the local community;
- contributing to local development.

Recommendations

When planning the funding of the Program, it is important to take into account:

- Profiles of residencies, their priorities, and level of maturity;
- Necessary and additional criteria that art residencies should meet in order to ensure the quality of their services

Fostering sustainability

Lithuania does not have a large network of organizations that carry out permanent art residencies activities. 10 organizations regularly carry out art residencies activities, but up to 30 other organizations that carry out residency activities occasionally have received funding during the period of 2015-2020 from the “Residencies of Artists and Cultural Creators in Lithuania” program.

Recommendations: funding for art residencies should encourage their cooperation, not competition. Dividing the residency program into two parts – for beginners (“Preparatory”) and for the established (“Regular”) – would enable art residencies to seek more sustainable and valid collaborative opportunities.

Preparatory program	Regular program
Its goal is to create a suitable starting position for new initiatives and to ensure the provision of quality services: to create the necessary soft infrastructure to receive residents, and to carry out other activities of art residencies.	The aim is to ensure the continuity of established art residencies by assessing their achievements and goals and how they manage to meet them.

Resource efficiency

The chances of making an impact depend directly on the human, infrastructural, and financial resources allocated to it. There is a lack of curators and other people responsible for the activities of Lithuanian residencies.

Recommendations: allocating a significant portion of funding for the administration of the art residency program, and the employment of a curator or other professional staff would strengthen the quality of an art residency. When focusing on “soft” infrastructure, it is important to keep in mind the support of “hard” infrastructure, which would allow to maintain and improve the quality of art residency activities.

Increasing geographical coverage

Most of the art residencies in Lithuania implement their activities around the three main urban centers. Such residency locations coincide with areas of socio-economic viability, so their capacity to address local issues remains limited.

Recommendations: in addition to the consistent model of cultural development and the model of equitable cultural development, in order to create a more unbiased impact of art residencies on the environment, increase cultural accessibility and funding efficiency, priority should be given to art residencies located in more problematic areas of Lithuania, especially those with the lowest socio-economic viability. Hence new consistently operating art residencies could appear in Northern Lithuania (Utena, Panevėžys, or Šiauliai districts).

Promoting transparency

The transparency of art residencies refers to:

- whether it is clear to artists what conditions will be provided during their residencies,
- what services can one expect,
- how residents are selected,
- what artists are encouraged to apply,
- and what residents have already resided.

Art residencies operating in Lithuania (with certain exceptions) do not focus on providing this kind of information.

Recommendations: the first and foremost condition to ensure quality services for incoming residents is clear communication and agreement on expectations. Art residencies shall publish as clearly and openly as possible what criteria should the artists meet in order to reside in a particular residency, as well as what will be expected of incoming residents and what conditions will be provided.

Creating conditions for creativity

The importance of “hard” infrastructure is highlighted when talking about the impact of art residencies on the artist:

- accommodation,
- work and creative spaces,
- meeting, exhibition and performance spaces.

Only then does the “soft” infrastructure follow:

- networking,
- dissemination opportunities,
- mentoring and curating,
- publicity, etc.

Recommendations: to increase the quality of soft infrastructure, as art residencies have an impact on the artists’ overall activities and development, rather than on one specific work, it is crucial to create environment that encourages development of artists by different means.

Promoting networks

Art residencies lack a greater focus on networks and their development. Currently, only a few art residencies in Lithuania are known outside the national borders and participate in the international art scene.

Recommendations: communication between art residencies should be encouraged through interdisciplinary programs, mentoring for newer ones by more experienced residencies' representatives, centralized dissemination, exchange of infrastructure, knowledge and competencies, for example, by allowing incoming artists to reside in several Lithuanian residencies at the same time or consecutively.

Ensuring the development of artists

Educational activities for artists in residency programs operating in Lithuania could be divided into two categories:

- programs that provide residents with opportunities to formally improve their qualifications through lectures, seminars, and various workshops;

- programs that use only informal activities for the education of residents, such as communication and cooperation between residents or various work with the local community.

Recommendations: art residencies, by providing the tools and space to create, should also ensure the personal and professional development of artists. To assess this, data on residents' achievements during and after residency should be monitored. It would also be relevant to consider the consistent monitoring of artists by an independent third party, which would also set up a separate monitoring model.

Fostering the sustainable involvement of local communities

Art residencies, often operating close to local communities, can stimulate their interest in art and culture and can therefore contribute to greater interest in and participation in culture. Art residencies, being creative, open spaces, allow people who might not otherwise encounter each other to come together, which expands cultural knowledge and community cohesion.

Recommendations: the impact on the local community should be based on dialogue to find out the specific needs of the locals so as not to harm their area. Cooperation with the community should be long-term and consistent. Significant environmental impacts are achieved if they are not carried out through project activities, but rather through coherent cooperation and a long-term perspective.

Scholarship program*

Undeveloped art residency opportunities for Lithuanian artists: During the last five years (2015-2020), the Culture Support Fund has funded **only 67 scholarships** that were intended to be used for art residencies.

Conditions must be created for foreign artists to apply to the Scholarship Program (for instance, application form in English should be available), thus gaining greater dissemination about the Scholarship Program from the art residencies themselves.

The scholarship program could be run on an ongoing basis to allow artists to apply according to their plans to go to art residencies. In order to avoid the ongoing administration costs of the program, it is proposed to create an additional Scholarship Program for the mobility of artists-creators only.

* Scholarship program – scholarships awarded by the LCC to cultural or art creators; educational scholarships for cultural or artistic creators; state scholarships for cultural and artistic creators.

Monitoring

The focus for qualitative criteria when evaluating the activities of art residencies shall be increased.

The concept of outcome should be reviewed and different “result” criteria should be applied to different types of art residencies: targeting the impact on the artist, the impact on the environment, the creation of conditions for residency activities, or the continuity of existing activities. The evaluation criteria and results achieved should not be limited to quantitative ones (number of art products, number of visitors,

number of educational activities, etc.) but also they should encompass qualitative measures: evaluation of selection transparency (clear procedure for selecting residents), partnerships established, community surveys on the impact of art residencies on the site, surveys on residents’ needs and expectations fulfillment, long-term monitoring of residents’ careers.