

**Jakonen, Olli & Mitchell, Ritva (2015): Additional value of EU Structural Funds and the European Agricultural Fund for Finnish cultural policy. Cupore webpublications 29. (Kulttuuripolitiikan yhteys EU:n innovaatio- ja aluepolitiikkaan. EU:n rakennerahastojen ja maaseudun kehittämissohjelman lisäarvo kansalliselle kulttuuripolitiikalle.)**

### English summary

The European Union's regional, structural and agricultural policy complements and reinforces national policy. The activities of the EU Structural Funds and those of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development have had an impact on the Finnish cultural sector ever since Finland joined the EU in 1995. Structural Funds and Agricultural Fund have become important instruments for cultural policy in Finland especially at regional and local levels.

This survey of the Structural Fund and Rural Development programmes in mainland Finland was commissioned in 2015 by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture<sup>1</sup> and conducted by the Finnish Foundation for Cultural Policy Research CUPORE. Its purpose was to determine the significance and impact that the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Rural Development Programme have had on cultural development in the programme period 2007–2013. The survey was carried out to gain more information on project implementation from the perspective of culture and the effectiveness of the cultural projects. Several cultural projects were also analyzed from the perspectives of innovativeness, effectiveness and contributions to cultural policy. The survey and project analyses incorporated also previous research conducted in the Ministry<sup>2</sup> and in CUPORE<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, the purpose of the study was to examine the EU cultural projects in relation to the goals and indicators of national cultural policy effectiveness, divided into the four subcategories of 1) cultural foundation, 2) creative workers, 3) culture and citizens, 4) culture and the economy.<sup>4</sup> The ultimate objective was to serve national, regional and local developers engaged in the culture sector and project activities by providing different levels of information about new development measures introduced in projects, and about their results. The information can be used, for example, to prepare and implement cultural policy during the ongoing structural funds programme period 2014–2020.

The survey material was collected during 2014 using earlier reports, the structural funds database and information from the Ministry and the Agency of Rural Affairs. Of the overall project material, cultural projects were identified on the basis of their title and a brief summary. In some cases, the implementer of a project could also serve as grounds for it to be identified as a cultural one. In the thematic review the projects were categorized into those involving 1) creative economy and cultural entrepreneurship, 2) cultural tourism, 3) cultural well-being and 4) culture in general (cultural infrastructure, cultural heritage and cultural environments). One should take notice that the somewhat loose categorization was based on earlier reports and the Ministry's needs to find out how well the structural funding caters to the strategic plans and objectives of the national cultural policy.

It is open to interpretation how cultural projects were thematically identified from the overall project volume on the basis of brief descriptions in project applications. Identifying cultural projects from the large amount of information involved hard work, since culture plays a role in the operation of several kinds of programmes, as well as in projects funded by various different parties. Projects that mainly focus on developing other sectors, such as tourism, may also include measures with a cultural target. The basic orientation of Structural Fund projects is multidisciplinary.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://okm.fi/OPM/Kulttuuri?lang=en>

<sup>2</sup> <http://okm.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2012/liitteet/OKM16.pdf?lang=fi>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cupore.fi/Kult.pol.yhteysEUinnovaatiojaaluepolitiikkaan.php>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2011/liitteet/OKM16.pdf?lang=fi>

The funding for different development projects was allocated on the grounds of the targets and focuses defined in Finland's Structural Fund Strategy 2007–2013. In the survey, also this national strategy was empirically analyzed from the viewpoint of cultural measures and actions. The survey also examines project participants, focusing on the implementers. The projects were classified by the type of organisation carrying out the project and identified as public, private or third sector projects.

Approximately 700 culturally oriented ESF and ERDF projects were identified. Their combined EU and state funding totalled over 200 million euro at the end of 2014. The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development is one of the channels used to fund the development of cultural activities in rural areas. The review looked into the overall funding allocated to each project, consisting of public (EU, state, municipal, other public sector) and private funding. A total of 1075 culturally oriented rural projects were identified. Their total funding allocated by the public and private sectors amounted to around 72 million euros at the end of 2014. Altogether 1700 projects under the Structural Funds and Agricultural fund were identified as cultural by nature during the 2007–2013 programme period.

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the EU's main employment policy instrument, which is used to support employment by improving job opportunities and service structures. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), in turn, supports projects that develop companies, encourage innovation, boost networking and improve regional infrastructure and accessibility. Thematically, most of the ESF cultural funding was allocated to projects related to creative economy and cultural entrepreneurship (approx. 47 million €). ERDF funding was allocated to creative economy and cultural tourism (both approx. 40 million €), as well as to culture in general (approx. 34 million € mainly to cultural infrastructure, cultural environment and cultural heritage). The support from the Agricultural Fund was allocated mostly to the local and regional culture(s) in general (infrastructure, environment and heritage).

A significant share of the ESF projects were carried out by universities, universities of applied sciences and associations, while most of the ERDF projects were implemented by municipalities and municipal federations. What stands out is that actual cultural players account for a rather small share of the project implementers. Especially for small cultural institutions and players it was difficult to implement Structural Fund projects. The cultural projects of the Agricultural Fund are carried out mainly by relatively small third-sector associations (nearly 70 % of all the cultural projects). Thus, these associations and the third sector in general play a major role in the cultural development and vitality of Finnish rural areas.

From the perspective of cultural and art policy, the objectives of rural development projects differ from those of Structural Fund projects. The latter are often linked to objectives defined in national and regional strategies and programmes. For example, ERDF is an important instrument for regional cultural heritage and infrastructure, and ESF for the education of artists and producers in creative economy. However, the implementation of financially small-scale rural development projects departs mainly from the needs and conditions of local residents. The goal is to improve rural residents' quality of life, which also involves culture and cultural infrastructure, rather than follow national art and cultural policies.

Following the lines of the EU Lisbon Strategy, the ideas and concepts of innovation, creative economy and cultural entrepreneurship constructed the main framework among the Structural Fund's cultural projects. Those are the main (conceptual) themes under which funding has been allocated during the 2007–2013 period. The rationale within structural funding, emphasizing competitiveness, economic development and entrepreneurship, is somewhat different from traditional art and cultural policy, although these ideas and rationales have been increasingly prevalent within the Finnish national cultural policy as well since 1990s.

To sum up, the EU funding in Finland has contributed significantly to enhancing and preserving local culture(s), cultural environment and cultural heritage. In addition, cultural infrastructure has been

renovated (for example the Korundi House of Culture in Rovaniemi) and new infrastructure has been built (for example the Arteles Creative Center in Haukijärvi and Pukstaavi in Sastamala). The funding has also contributed to the vitality of cultural tourism and promoted the operational preconditions of creative economy through measures taken in the contexts education, operational models and networking. The EU cultural projects are also relevant for national cultural policy goals and effectiveness areas, but this theme needs to be explored in more detail in the future. In addition, a “down to top” approach and taking into account the viewpoints of local and regional project implementers, such as different cultural institutions and players, is strongly recommended as a starting point for the future research.

Link to the report (Finnish only):

[http://www.cupore.fi/verkkojulkaisut\\_29.php](http://www.cupore.fi/verkkojulkaisut_29.php)