



# Memorandum of Understanding

For the establishment of the DIGIMUSE Network  
*A European network of demo-ethnoanthropological small museums*



## Table of content

Introduction.....	3
DIGI.MUSE Network .....	4
Mission .....	4
Objectives .....	5
Activities .....	5
Governance, legal form and communication rules .....	6



## Introduction

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was drafted to fill a gap reported at European level by creating the first European network of small museums, which responds to the specific needs of the operators and visitors of those peculiar cultural spaces. An important role within the network will be played by the demo-ethno-anthropological museums and their educational and inclusive role in the local communities.

This MoU is one of the results of the Erasmus+ project DIGI.MUSE - KA210 Small-scale partnerships in vocational education and training - led by Genti D'Abruzzo Foundation, based in Pescara (IT) in Garibaldi Square 41/2 C.F. The Foundation, which manages the "Museum of the People of Abruzzo" - one of the most innovative structures in the context of national demo-anthropological museums - and the Civic Museum "Basilio Cascella" has collaborated with international partners to develop up-skilling pathways and resources aimed at small museums' operators.

The partners of the DIGI.MUSE project are the Institut de Haute Formation aux Politiques Communautaires asbl (IHF) based in Brussels, Belgium, and the IT company Internet Web Solutions (IWS) based in Malaga, Spain.

The joint work of the Foundation and other partners has led to the development of the following results:

- Project Result 1: Schematic guide to digital solutions to promote inclusion activities in small museums, made of illustrative factsheets and analytical matrix;
- Project Result 2: Practical guide for participation in the Erasmus+ programme for small museums;
- Project Result 3: Guidelines and documentary basis for the creation of a European network of small museums.

Project results are available online on the website of the Museum of the People of Abruzzo at the following link: <https://www.gentidabruzzo.com/progetto-digimuse/>

This document represents one of the concrete outcomes of PR3 outlining the mission, structure and functioning of the DIGI.MUSE network, which will launch its activities as an informal network gathering museums and cultural organisations across Europe sharing same goals and objectives. After three years of activity and based on the previous informal experience, Genti D'Abruzzo Foundation will establish - as better explained in the next paragraph - the formal DIGI.MUSE Network, an official entity with a more structured governance directly managed by the Foundation.

## DIGI.MUSE Network

The establishment of the DIGI.MUSE network is structured in two steps:

1. Establishment of an **informal network** in the form of a **Community of Practice (CoP)**, which will gather informally small museums and cultural associations across Europe sharing the same mission and goals.

The access to the network is **free**. No costs nor particular obligations are required to join the DIGI.MUSE CoP, other than adhering to the rules set in the Memorandum of Understanding. Every museum or organisation based in Europe working in the fields of interest of the CoP and sharing its values and goals can access. The common interests provide the foundation for collaboration.

Membership is obtained through an expression of interest expressed via Google Form <https://forms.gle/csjBpg6eG5yTDwCL6> and after reviewing the present document.

2. After three years of activity, the experience of the informal network will lead to the establishment of **a formal entity**, a more structured network directly managed by the Genti D'Abruzzo Foundation. A **membership fee** will be required as a form of self-financing for ensuring the regular functioning of the network. Further sources of financing will be explored by the same members of the network, for instance through the identification of relevant calls and participation in European projects.

## Mission

Museums are the ideal space in which to build and strengthen the sense of awareness and belonging, of identity and civic responsibility through heritage education. Democratic access to cultural heritage is a right of all citizens as stated in the Convention of Faro (2005) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Museums present themselves as places in which to exercise active citizenship and participate in the democratic life. In particular, the education on Cultural Heritage conducted in demo-anthropological museums, implemented through non-formal and informal ways, encourages a sense of the common good, which is particularly important for local communities in order to recognize themselves in a set of shared values of their social, cultural and historical heritage. Strategies need to be identified and implemented to ensure democratic access to cultural spaces aimed at breaking down all type of barriers, which stand between the citizen and the cultural asset.

Within this context, the DIGI.MUSE Network will work taking into account the following mission:

*“Guiding small museums through innovation processes that promote their role of educational and cultural mediators between generations and towards social groups with fewer opportunities, making of small museums an ideal space of openness, inclusiveness and innovation”.*

## Objectives

- **Objective 1: Boost the skills of small museums' operators**

One of the main needs of museums' operators is the participation in up-skilling pathways. Enhanced competence and skills are necessary to exploit the potential of the technologies for a digital transformation of the cultural offer while ensuring sustainability and inclusiveness of the cultural sphere.

The DIGI.MUSE Network will work to promote up-skilling opportunities among small museums' operators and enhance their competences and skills, in particular in terms of digital technologies, sustainable and inclusive cultural offer, networking and EU programmes and initiatives.

- **Objective 2: Increase visibility of and access to small museums**

The DIGI.MUSE Network will work for increasing the visibility of small museums at local and EU level while ensuring a wider and more inclusive access to those spaces, in particular for local communities and disadvantaged groups.

Pursuing this objective is vital for preserving cultural heritage, promoting diversity, fostering education, driving economic growth, engaging communities, supporting artistic expression and encouraging research, since small museums play an essential role in enriching society and enhancing the understanding of the world.

## Activities

The objectives pursued by the DIGI.MUSE Network (both informal and formal) will be reached by carrying out the following activities:

- **Biannual meetings** between the network members which will take the form of **thematic working tables**.

These represent face-to-face or online meetings that will be organised by members of the network on a rotating basis. The first meeting will take place in Pescara during 2024.

Working groups can be formed through spontaneous collaborations among museums on topics of common interest, such as the use of digital technology in educational services, digital communication and promotion, and the potential formalization and development of the network.

- **Exchange of experiences and best practices**, which provide several valuable benefits for museums: gain valuable insights and knowledge from each other's successes and failures, facilitate continuous learning and improvement; discover different approaches that inspire creativity and innovation, encouraging the adoption of fresh ideas; identify potential partners for joint projects; save costs and mitigate risks by implementing best practices. Information about participating museums, updates on new activities and museum experiences, training courses, seminars, conferences, webinars, and anything useful for achieving the objectives will be shared and exchanged.

- **Activities aimed at exploring joint work opportunities.** In this way, it will be possible to enrich the collaborative spirit among the members, increase impact, capacity building and learning opportunities, optimise resources, and foster a thriving community focused on maximizing their collective potential.
- **Monitoring and evaluation of calls for proposal to explore participation opportunities in European projects.** This activity is particularly relevant for the scale and scope of the network since data prove a pressing need to strengthen competences of museums' operators in the design and management of European projects. Indeed, only 6% of projects in Creative Europe are made by museums and the percentage drops below 1% in programmes like Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens and Horizon2020 (NEMO, 2019).
- Organization of **parallel thematic events** taking inspiration from similar initiatives at EU level, like the thematic weeks and days (e.g., the European Week of Regions and Cities, the European Vocational Skills week, the Erasmus Days...). Moreover, events promoting education in small museums through digital tools will be organized.

## Governance, legal form and communication rules

### - The informal network (DIGI.MUSE Community of Practice)

The informal network gathering small museums has no formal leadership and does not constitute a legal entity. The governance structure relies on a decentralized and self-organizing approach. This governance allows participants to come together as a **Community of Practice**, where they can learn from each other, leverage collective knowledge, and work towards their shared goals of preserving and promote cultural heritage and engaging their communities effectively.

Communication among the members of the Community will happen mainly via e-mail. Further communication modalities will be explored by the members after the establishment of the network. Based on the information collected within the Google Form, the e-mail addresses of the organisations expressing an interest in joining the network will form a mailing list. The latter will allow members to share information that are relevant to the Community's activities.

### - The DIGI.MUSE formal network

After the first three years of activities in the informal network, there is an intention to establish a formal network that will enable a more organized planning and implementation of activities aimed at achieving the objectives. The formalization methods of the network are currently being studied by the DIGIMUSE project partnership and will be the subject of one of the thematic discussions that will be carried out by the informal network.

The formal DIGI.MUSE Network will adopt a more structured and formal governance which will allow the implementation of the activities under the guidance of the Genti d'Abruzzo Foundation. To join the formal network, organisations will be required to fill in an online application form. It will be necessary to sign the declarations indicated and pay annually the membership fee identified. Amount and modalities for the payment of the fee will be identified at a later stage according to what discussed during the dedicated thematic table organised by the informal network.