

ELMADINA ARTS

Participatory Arts and Community Co-Design for Public Space Transformation in Alexandria

TARGET CALL

HORIZON-NEB-2026-01-PARTICIPATION-02

TOPIC

Innovative approaches for the spatial design of neighbourhoods

Organisation at a glance

ElMadina Arts for Performing and Digital Arts is an Alexandria-based Egyptian cultural organisation founded in 2000. It works through performing arts, social theatre, cultural programming, public-space practice and participatory facilitation, connecting residents, artists and local actors around questions of place, voice, belonging and collective action.

Strategic fit with PARTICIPATION-02

ElMadina can contribute a North African neighbourhood demonstrator in Alexandria and lead the cultural and community co-design layer. Its role is not architectural or engineering design; it is to make diverse user perspectives visible, support inclusive deliberation, prototype public-space use through arts-based methods, and generate practice evidence with urban and academic partners.

Relevant practice: Karmouz / Soub

ElMadina's Karmouz work provides a grounded precedent. Through street-based storytelling and the 'Cultural Steps' process, residents' stories and local activities informed a co-created cultural map and guide to the neighbourhood. The related 'I Am from Karmouz' storytelling and public-presentation practice made residents' narratives, skills and dignity visible, using public and semi-public space as a setting for dialogue, imagination and collective learning.

What we bring

- 25+ years of performing arts, social theatre, community engagement and cultural work in Alexandria.
- Arts-based methods for listening, place reading, power mapping, storytelling, scenario work and facilitated deliberation.
- Credible access to residents, artists, cultural practitioners and local networks in dense, under-resourced neighbourhood contexts.
- Capacity to co-design temporary tests, cultural activations and public experiences before permanent spatial decisions are made.
- An Arabic-speaking, Southern Mediterranean demonstrator that strengthens geographic and socio-cultural comparison across the consortium.

Call requirements we can help meet

The topic requires demonstration in at least three neighbourhoods in different eligible countries and attention to gendered, age-related and identity-related patterns of public-space use, accessibility, safety, belonging and measurable social, cultural and environmental effects. ElMadina can own the participatory and cultural contribution in one demonstrator while qualified partners lead spatial planning, climate, biodiversity, accessibility and impact measurement.

Proposed consortium role

ElMadina seeks responsibility for an Alexandria demonstrator or a defined task within a work package on user participation and co-design. Scope, site permissions, indicators and budget would be agreed with the coordinator, municipality, spatial-design and research partners.

#	Contribution	What ElMadina can deliver
1	Neighbourhood inquiry	Map users, rhythms, barriers, stories, informal practices and power relations through ethical arts-based listening and place reading.

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| 2 | Inclusive engagement | Recruit and support diverse residents, with deliberate attention to women, youth, older people, persons with disabilities and less-heard users. |
| 3 | Creative co-design | Translate lived experience into scenarios, spatial narratives, prototypes and community priorities with architects and planners. |
| 4 | Temporary testing | Use performances, walks, cultural activations and small-scale trials to observe how people use, avoid and reshape public space. |
| 5 | Evidence and transfer | Document participation quality, ownership, belonging and behavioural change; contribute Arabic materials and cross-site learning. |

Pilot proposition: Alexandria

- A dense urban neighbourhood where public-space use, mobility, care, safety, identity and informal social life intersect.
- A staged process: place reading; resident listening; joint interpretation; co-design; temporary tests; spatial recommendations; learning review.
- A comparative Southern Mediterranean case that can test whether the shared approach transfers beyond European urban conditions.

Partners and conditions required

We seek a consortium with a credible coordinator, municipalities or public-space authorities, architects and spatial planners, climate and biodiversity expertise, accessibility specialists, SSH researchers and an evaluation partner. Participation is conditional on a substantive, costed role; feasible site access and permissions; shared decision-making; safeguarding; and clear ownership and consent for stories, images and community-generated materials.

Contact

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