JOINT CALL FOR PROPOSALS

FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROJECTS ON

BUILDING TRANSFORMATION CAPACITY THROUGH ARTS AND DESIGN: UNLOCKING THE FULL POTENTIAL FOR URBAN TRANSITIONS

A Joint Call within the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme ERA-NET Cofund Urban Transformation Capacities (ENUTC) under Grant Agreement No. 101003758

Proposal: Consortium and General Information[1]

1. Project Overview

[*General information will be inserted in the online submission system UDiManager at uefiscdi-direct.ro*]

Project Short Title/Acronym: SOUND UP			
Project Full Title: Sounding Urban Places			
Main Applicant (Organisation + name of the PI): Luleå University of Technology, Stefan Östersjö			
Call topics: (tick the relevant call topic(s)) ☐ Topic 1: Experimentation and co-creation for a beautiful and sustainable urban future ☐ Topic 2: Transformation to sustainable cities / urban transformation ☐ Topic 3: Designing Inclusive, Liveable and Green Neighbourhoods			
Keyword 1: Sound Art Keyword 2: Soundscape studies Keyword 3: Co-creation Keyword 4: Citizen science Keyword 5: Sustainability			
Total project costs in EUR:	**416.126,60**	Requested funds in EUR:	**416.126,60**

[1] Detailed financial information must be given in the Financial Information section on *uefiscdi-direct.ro*

Duration of the project in months (max. 24):	24	Expected start:	[01.2024]
Total effort in person months:	25,2	Expected end:	[12.2025]

2. Abstract

Sound Up is an interdisciplinary arts-based research project, building on community engagement in data collection and artistic co-creation with a focus on sound. The project seeks - on a practical as well as theoretical level - to enable an improved quality of life (for all living beings) in residential areas and public (urban) spaces through a considered artistically inspired (re-)design of the sonic environment. Through cooperation across a diverse interdisciplinary team, ranging from (sound) artists to landscape architects, and from historians and ethnographers to sound studies scholars, the project develops new insights and tools of relevance to such practical and applied fields as urban design and regional development. Additionally, the project is designed to establish new active collaborations with stakeholders and businesses in order to set this innovative approach in practice, and thereby to contribute tangibly to the green transition and development of sustainable and more attractive living environments.

3. Project Consortium

	Organisation	Type of organisation[2]	Country / Funding agency[3]	Contact Person (first name and family name)
Project Coordinator/Main Applicant	Piteå School of Music at Luleå University of Technology	RO	SE	Stefan Östersjö
Project Partner 2[4]	Koninklijk Conservatorium, University of the Arts The Hague	RO	NL	Paul Craenen

[2] Type of organisations: SE = small enterprise; ME = medium-sized enterprise; LE = large enterprise; RO = research organisation, OTH = other type of organization. *Note: With regard to the size of companies, for all EU member states the current definitions of SMEs given in the EU competition law are applied (definition of small and medium-sized enterprises and of independent businesses in accordance with recommendation 2003/361/EC of the Commission dated 6 May 2003, [ABl. L 124 of 20.5.2003, pp. 36-41]; cf. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/sme_definition/sme_user_guide_en.pdf).*

[3] Consortium partners from Belgium must name their respective funding agency/agencies.

[4] "Project Partner" in this table means a Co-Applicant or a Co-operation Partner (see chapter 3 of the call text).

Project Partner 3	Leiden University (Academy of Creative and Performing Arts)	RO	NL	Marcel Cobussen
Project Partner 4	Soundtrackcity	OTH	NL	Renate Zentschnig
Project Partner 5	I'M BINCK	OTH	NL	Sabrina Lindemann
Project Partner 6	Kluster	OTH	SE	Hans Lennart Jonsäll

4. Quality of Work, Project Objectives and Targets (max. 4 pages)

4.1. Project aims, objectives and targets, positioning with respect to the state of the art, existing knowledge or solutions and other recently completed or on-going comparable projects

The project seeks - on a practical as well as theoretical level - to enable an improved quality of life (for all living beings) in residential areas and public (urban) spaces through a considered artistically inspired (re-)design of the sonic environment. Several national and international reports (e.g. King, 2022) state that exposure to too many or too loud sounds has a negative effect on the well-being of living beings. But regarding attention for sound pollution in, especially, densely populated areas, we see two problems:

1. Architects, urban planners, and property developers usually have little attention for and knowledge of sound;
2. And *if* sound is addressed, this is always done negatively, based on models instead of real experiences and usually measured in decibels only (so, with a mere emphasis on loudness).

This proposal builds on 4 premises:

- sound is an integral aspect of our habitat/environment and therefore requires serious attention;
- sound is not only a problem: it can contribute positively to the experience of a certain place; sound is directly connected to issues of ecology, sustainability, biodiversity, and liveability;
- in order to achieve this more attention should go to the aural design of such places;
- this aural design should not only come from the hard sciences but, and perhaps even primarily, from the humanities and the arts. In other words, sound artists should be considered as urban (co-)designers who approach sound in a positive and creative way

<u>Ignoring the Sonic</u>

"A future that is "beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls". This is the opening sentence of Topic 1 of the current BTC-ENUTC call. And in a nutshell, it is also addressing one of the problems when it comes to imagine, transform, and (re)design future sustainable (urban) environments: the absence of the audible when it comes to rethinking (the future of) urban environments. Although international organisations like WHO time and again warn that noise pollution is one of the most pressing problems of contemporary life, imagining future living conditions in sustainable urban environments still has a strong focus on the visual (and perhaps the tactile). This artistic research proposal is one initiative to put sound more prominently on the agenda. Sound is an inextricable element of the human and non-human environment, and especially in densely populated areas where numerous different activities produce many different sounds this sonic environment needs as much attention as the visual environment. As noted by Cerwén

and Mossberg (2019) “it is not only sound pressure levels which are important [...], but also the quality of the sound”. Instead of aiming for urban environments that are as quiet as possible, our emphasis here is at least partly on how we can create *interesting* soundscapes, that is, soundscapes that are attractive to living beings. And in order to achieve this - and this is the claim of the current proposal - we not only need acousticians or sound engineers; in order to investigate our current sonic environment, in order to propose alternatives to current soundscapes, in order to trigger our sonic imagination, sound artists should be involved in the development of urban sites at a very early stage (Lacey 2016).

According to Cobussen, the first stage of “engaging with the everyday sounds of a city” in order to improve the overall soundscape is a *description* of all present sounds, while the second stage is *interpretation* (in terms of possible emotions and meanings to which they may be connected). But Cobussen continues: “The third stage, creation, can lead to some concrete interventions in the sonic ambiance in order to change it. By subtracting, adding, transforming or unmasking sounds, one can help to develop an acoustic sensibility and enable new and creative experiences through the acoustic diversification and adaptation of an urban environment” (Cobussen, 2022a, p.104). Particularly sound artists are well-equipped to reveal the hidden potentialities of a specific site.

Beyond the Acoustic

Although intervening (or not) in an existing soundscape of course immediately has its influence on the acoustic qualities of a site, its effect reaches way beyond the acoustic. On the one hand, sounds instigate and even stimulate certain behaviour; on the other hand, humans as well as non-humans create their sonic environment by producing sounds - they bring life to an environment. In that sense, designing a site sonically is strongly setting conditions for all kinds of interactions (or for preventing these). Sound also has a socio-political component: city sounds determine our whereabouts. A soundscape invites us (or doesn't invite us) to reside, to recreate, to socially engage with others. Important questions are: who or what dominates a space aurally? Who or what determines which sounds sound? And who or what is thereby sonically excluded or hardly audible?

Aims and Research Questions

It is against this background of a certain deafness towards the role, function, and position of sound in our contemporary culture, life, and environment, as well as the social, political, ecological, and aesthetic influence of sound that this project aims to develop artistic as well as academic or scientific methods for participatory design of soundscapes and to determine how such methods may contribute to an enhanced wellbeing, inclusivity and quality of life in some carefully selected urban environments in Europe (Sweden and The Netherlands). The consortium will comprehensively examine the following guiding research questions:

- How can artistic and practice-based sonic interventions, that harness the imagination of sound artists and individual inhabitants, enhance wellbeing and sustainability in urban areas in contrasting European settings?
- How can ecological sound art, sound studies, historical research, and ethnographic fieldwork, contribute to the development of participatory methods for documenting change over time in soundscapes?
- How can different stakeholders and individual citizens be directly involved in the design of more attractive sonic environments in urban areas in Sweden and The Netherlands?

These research questions logically lead to the following objectives:

- Developing artistic and practice-based sonic interventions of the experience of sound and its relationship aimed at enhancing wellbeing and sustainability;
- Developing participatory and cross-disciplinary methods for documenting change over time in soundscapes found in contrasting Swedish and Dutch sites;

- Efficiently sharing the above method development and taking initiatives to dialogue and creatively engage with stakeholders and local communities.

As theoretical foundations for this project we will use among others: the notions of “sonic ecology 2.0” and “everyday sounds” as developed by Marcel Cobussen (2016; 2022a respectively); The possible strategies for sonic interventions as developed by Jordan Lacey (2016); The potential relationships between architecture and sound as proposed by Alex Arteaga (2017).

4.2. Project realisation

Research Methods and Technologies

We will draw on fieldwork strategies from the fields of ambient anthropology (Guillebaud, 2017), ecological sound art (Stefánsdóttir, & Östersjö, 2022), and soundscape acoustics (Kang & Schulte-Fortkamp, 2016). Soundscape recording and “soundwalking” (Cobussen, 2022b) as methods to make perceptible “other possibilities of how things might be and relate to each other; they can be steps toward more or less substantial (non-artistic) sonic interventions, changes that directly affect the sonic ambiance of a particular place” (Cobussen, 2022a, p.102). Sensor technologies are essential to the project's operation, and have already proven to allow users to experience sounds inside of trees, for example, as well as in industrial settings, such as audifying the ground vibrations in a harbour (Berg, Hultqvist & Östersjö, in press).

Using “citizen science” as a research method means that we will tap in on the knowledge of people living in the specific areas under investigation. This can, amongst others, be done by providing them with audio equipment, techniques and approaches so that they can make their own field recordings, consisting of sounds they like and dislike or sounds that are about to disappear and should be preserved.

- Experience with participatory sonic mapping tools in the Soundtrackcity projects Sonic West and Urban Sound Lab will be built on and adapted to the specific situation. These tools include TRACKS, an app for recording and logging sounds, an online database/map of the resulting sound archive, and sculptural “Sonic Aggregators” - listening stations which give access to this database including the creative input of local inhabitants and invited artists.
- As in previous research carried out by members of the Swedish research team, collaboration will be sought with Sami villages for the parts of the project carried out in Kiruna.
- For the research in the Binckhorst in The Hague, existing collaborations with cultural and community organisations will be expanded and partnerships with local schools will be established, including John Dewey College, a new school focused on project-based learning.
- Participatory Geographic Information System (PGIS) is used to combine geospatial information with sketch maps to represent people’s spatial knowledge of sound effects in the forms of two-dimensional maps (Kyttä, 2012). This geographic map, with the identified sound memories or experience, spatially locates explicit values of residents’ living environment. Implementing this method in the project is critical for developing a place-based strategy to improve quality of life.

4.3. Overall project type: research and innovation aspects in relation to the project topic(s)

We selected topic 1, since we believe the challenges associated with sound in urban soundscapes can only be addressed through a deepened understanding of the *experience* of sound. Further, the potential for renewal and the development of new approaches, we believe, can only emerge as citizens are enabled to reimagine the soundscapes of their neighbourhood. Therefore, the project brings artists and researchers together developing participatory practices and research methods that are designed to draw out new knowledge through interaction with local inhabitants.

4.4. Consortium experience and complementary with other projects of the partners

Invisible Sounds (2016-present) is an urban sound art project initiated by Stefan Östersjö and the composer Anders Hultqvist. It has developed methods for the creation of ecological sound art which uses multimodal data collection, with sound recorded conventionally in air and water, as well as through the use of sensors placed in trees or on objects on the ground. While the project has already provided very detailed representations of place, SOUND UP opens up new avenues for building an understanding of place through deepened interaction with inhabitants. The LTU research team combines participatory methods like PGIS and stimulated recall for this purpose, but the expertise of the Dutch team with methods of sound mapping and soundwalking provides a wider outlook on cooperative approaches.

The report 'Ruimte voor de Rijnhaven', commissioned by the City of Rotterdam, was published in September 2022. This research project focussed on sound design and the perception of sound in an urban and formerly industrial harbour of Rotterdam. It was commissioned by the City of Rotterdam and involved Marcel Cobussen (Leiden University) and Michiel Huijsman (Soundtrackcity) along with architects, environmental advisers, and sound specialists. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to sound were used, including listening walks, field recording, and sound measurements. The research resulted in a number of recommendations for the further urban development of the area including acoustic interventions in urban design and (landscape) architecture. This approach to mapping can be further developed in the Binckhorst area as there are many physical similarities. The linked Soundtrackcity projects Sonic West and Urban Sound Lab will also form a basis for the methods employed in Den Haag (see further table 4.1 below). The focus in The Hague will be on sound walking and mapping methods, building on the experience of sound and visual artist Justin Bennett, and on the expertise of Soundtrackcity with co-creation. Additionally, through the involvement of the education department of the Royal Conservatoire, educational approaches to environmental sound will be developed that can be applied more widely.

I'M BINCK is an independent local platform of and for the Binckhorst area of Den Haag and has been working together with local users, entrepreneurs, residents, and schoolchildren, on a sustainable and inclusive Binckhorst for more than 12 years. The 'core values of Binckhorst', proposed by I'M BINCK, which were ratified in the City Council of The Hague in 2017, have since been incorporated into the municipality's Area Approach and Environmental Plan. In 2020, the Dutch *Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie* supported the project 'Samen erfgoed maken in de Binckhorst' which explored how the cultural heritage present in the Binckhorst can be given new meaning and used for a social, inclusive and sustainable future of the area. I'M BINCK's experience with co-creation, its involvement in green urban transition and its engagement with local cultural heritage, next to its large network of residents, organisations, and enterprises, will play a crucial role in Sound UP.

Use the following table to provide the relevant information:

Table 4.1: Existing results and deliverables obtained from publicly funded projects which provide the basis of or feed into the proposed project

Funding provider	Project number	Title	Description of results already obtained and relevant deliverables (verifiable results / products of research, development and innovation work) in terms of the basis for / differentiation from the proposed project	Location and type of documentation (e.g. link to homepage, publication, conference proceedings, interim report, final report, …)
Municipality of Amsterdam		Urban Sound Lab	In 2017, Soundtrackcity launched Urban Sound Lab, a nomadic listening workshop in the South part of Amsterdam. The Lab was set up to make city dwellers aware of the connecting power and significance of their auditory experience of public space. Under the guidance of our artists, city dwellers of all ages actively engage with urban sound; in the streets and online. They collect city sounds that are meaningful to them personally, by themselves and under guidance. In workshops guided by artists people transform their sound experiences into words. The resulting stories are then placed on an interactive sound map that Soundtrackcity developed for the community and form material for listening guides, listening walks, audio walks, radio shows and presentations. https://urbansoundlab.nl/	https://urbansoundlab.nl
Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, Mondrian Fund, Creative Industrie		Sonic West	Sonic West is an interactive art object that reveals the results of an innovative work process in which citizens, professionals, sound artists and writers collectively explore the sound of the city. From 2015-2019 the art object has functioned as a listening furniture in which visitors can use an interactive map to listen to the sounds collected through crowdsourcing collected city sounds and stories.	https://sonicwest.soundtrackcity.nl

s Fund NL, Municipality of Amsterdam, Public Library			Sonic West creates an innovative physical as well as virtual interactive environment in which city dwellers are made aware of the connecting power and meaning of their auditory experience of public space. Under the guidance of artists, city dwellers collect city sounds that are meaningful to them, edit them and provide them with commentary. The aim of Sonic West is for Amsterdam residents to deepen their connection and involvement in their immediate living environment by listening and working with sound. Concrete sound is deployed to get local residents to reflect on questions such as "Who does this city belong to?" "What makes my city liveable?" via their own sensory experience of their surroundings. "What makes me feel connected to my surroundings?" "How do I want my surroundings to sound in the future?" "What can I contribute to this myself? “	
Creative Industries Fund NL,		Sonic Aggregator (follow-up of project Sonic West)	When we know how a space is to be used in the future, it is useful to tune the sound of the space to this in advance. This “tuning” is technically and organisationally possible, but rarely occurs in urban planning practice. We want to change that with the Sonic Aggregator. The sound design of urban space is called “sonic placemaking” and is a design process in which we give the users of the space an important role as experts, as they experience it on a daily basis.	https://sonicaggregator.org

Municipality of Rotterdam (NL)		Consultancy reports - Marcel Cobussen	The municipality of Rotterdam appointed Marcel Cobussen (often in collaboration with Soundtrackcity) to investigate at several locations in the city centre the possibilities to improve their sonic qualities, thereby contributing to an increased liveability and general well-being of their citizens as well as more sustainability, biodiversity, and ecological awareness. The analyses and recommendations resulting from this research have all been realised with the input from a team consisting of a scientist, an environmentalist, a philosopher, and artist-researchers.	Various final reports, e.g.: 'https://rijnhavengeluidsbeleving.nl/' 'https://hofbogengeluidsbeleving.nl/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Hoor-de-Hofbogen-een-onderzoek-naar-de-geluidsbeleving.pdf.' https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/document/10077155/1/21bb5519
Swedish Research Council Grant (SE)		Invisible Sounds	Invisible Sounds is an ecological sound art project, initiated by Östersjö and Hultqvist in 2016, as a part of an artistic research project funded by the Swedish Research Council. Particular to their approach is the multimodal collection of data, through recordings of sound in air and water, but also through the use of sensors. A foundational principle is the creation of performative interactions on site, as for instance through installations that integrate aeolian guitar interactions with wind (Östersjö, 2020; Berg, Hultqvist & Östersjö, in press). In the present proposal, these methods are adapted to the interaction with inhabitants in Kiruna in long-term collaborative process, using PGIS and stimulated recall as two methodological approaches.	
Arts and Humanities Research		Landscape Quartet	The Landscape Quartet was formed in 2012 and was first funded by the AHRC (2012-14) but also by an artistic residency program in Sweden (2013-14), the outcome of which were installations created in different sites in nature in which the group created interactive situations, through which visitors could further explore the sonic characteristics of the site, as well	

Council (UK)			as of the musical interaction, created often with acoustic instruments built into trees and other objects (see for instance https://kalvfestival.se/wp/musikalisk-naturvandring-landscape-quartet/) The work of the quartet (and also how it fed into the creation of the Invisible Sounds project) is further discussed by Östersjö (2020) and in a thematic issue of Contemporary Music Review https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/gcmr20/34/4	

5. Added value of international cooperation (max. 1 page)

The consortium brings together the unique and site-specific experience of the Swedish and Dutch partners with regard to sound studies scholarship, sound art interventions and co-creation in urban contexts. Although they represent well established and innovative approaches to the role of sound and sound art in urban environments, the Swedish and Dutch partners each developed specific creative, academic and participatory methods that invite an exchange of expertise, but that also allows them to act as 'critical friends' who can observe each other's research projects and give mutual feedback. Of particular importance in the collaboration is the different context of urban transition in which both partners operate. While The Hague's Binckhorst area is transforming from an industrialised to a residential area, the context of Norrbotten has an almost opposite perspective. Whereas the former industrial activity in Binckhorst was strongly linked to the car industry based on fossil fuels, in Norrbotten it is precisely the transition to the massive electrification of the car and transport industry, and the race for precious materials that goes with it, that drives the urban transition.
Different methods will be employed by the two teams, and the design of the project will enable cross-fertilization across the two sub-projects. Regular online meetings in the framework of the Sound Studies Hub will provide sharing of methods and findings. Carefully chosen visits in person of researchers to workshops organised by the partner team will provide a more detailed and lived exchange of expertise with regard to the use of research methods, participatory and co-creative strategies, and the use of audio technologies. Hence, the workshops in WP2 and WP3 are structured to allow such an exchange across the entire project.
The Sound Studies Hub will not only be the foundation for an exchange between the two teams, but in a later phase also involve students and teachers in the partner institutions, and other stakeholders in both areas in which the work is carried out. Key activities and work programme description

Strategy of the Project

The project builds on three main strategies:

1) To develop cross-disciplinary and participatory approaches to sound in urban areas, through combinations of artistic and scientific means. This work will be analysed and discussed in a series of refereed journal articles, presented in a thematic issue of the Journal of Sonic Studies.
2) To create artistic interventions in the form of installations and soundwalks, but also to empower inhabitants through workshops aimed at active and imaginative involvement with the soundscape of their daily environment.
3) To develop a Sound Studies Hub (SSH), which will first serve as a means for sharing findings and methods across the two research teams, but eventually, to expand SSH to further countries and parties, and secure its further development beyond the project period. Hence, the development of SSH constitutes the primary means for dissemination of project outcomes.