

A Sustainable Vision for the Sector of Collective Singing in the next Decade



Developed by the Singtank
as part of the project
Upgrade – Connect – Reach Out:
Raising Awareness for Collective Singing in Europe

A project of the European Choral Association (2017-2021)
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What is the Singtank?

The Singtank is a think tank for the development of a sustainable vision for the sector of collective singing for the years beyond 2020, created by the European Choral Association in the frame of the project Upgrade – Connect – Reach Out: Raising Awareness for Collective Singing in Europe, co-funded by the European Union Creative Europe programme. The Singtank was composed of 16 experts from different parts of the sector of collective singing, conductors, singers, managers, teachers and artists, with some representatives from the Board, Music Commission and Youth Committee of the European Choral Association, some representatives of members, some people who have worked with the association but have never been inside it, and some people who had not been in touch /did not know the association before, supported by staff members. All members brought in a unique perspective on the sector from their previous experiences and involvement in different genres, concert types and organisations.

The Singtank met physically in June 2018 and had online meetings in October 2020 and November 2021. In between, the membership of the European Choral Association gave feedback on the first draft document.

The starting point for the strategy was to look at the current “trends” (developments that are expected to become more relevant in future, such as an ageing society, environmental issues, growing isolation, the growing role of digital communication etc.), a brainstorming on how the sector can contribute to the development of collective singing and how collective singing may benefit society based on the value of collective singing, and consulting the European Agenda for Music (europeanagendaformusic.eu) for inspiration.

The task for the Singtank was to identify the topics that should be included in a long-term strategy, to list the main stakeholders who should be addressed with such a strategy and to explain why each topic is relevant, what could be done and who could or should do what for each of the topics.



Left to right: Marianne Zuur (NL, Facilitator), Sonja Greiner (DE, ECA staff), Helmut Schaumberger (AT, EAS), Sylvia Kerutt (DE, ECA staff), Flannery Ryan (DE/AT - ECA Youth Committee and later Board), Ben Lewis (UK), Burak Onur Erdem (TR, ECA Board), Anneliese Zeh (AT), Merzi Rajala (FI), Roxorloops (BE), Kathrin Renggli (CH) / Front: Masis Aram Gozbek (TR), Côme Ferrand Cooper (FR/DE, ECA staff at the time)
Not in the picture: Daphne Wassink (NL, ECA Board at the time), Tido Visser (NL), Carlo Pavese (IT, ECA-EC Board), Jim Daus (DK, ECA Music Commission at the time), Peder Karlsson (SE), Mads Bille (DK)

Topics chosen

1. Advocacy and Communication – Raising Awareness
2. Collective Singing as a Movement
3. Connecting through Digital Means
4. Inclusion
5. Networking and Cooperating
6. Format and Contents Development
7. Music Education
8. Environmental Sustainability - Harmony with Nature

Stakeholders identified

- Singers (choir singers and soloists)
- Beatboxers
- Conductors / vocal leaders
- Composers / songwriters / creators
- Managers
- (music) teachers / pedagogues
- Voice trainers / voice teachers
- Instrumentalists / orchestras / bands etc.
- Representatives of other art forms (dancers, actors, visual artists etc.)
- Technicians (light, sound technicians)
- Communication professionals (designers, video makers, writers, bloggers etc.)
- Other “Workers” related to collective singing performances
- Other citizens, not connected to collective singing (yet)
- Choirs / singing groups
- Organisations and institutions in the field
 - choral, vocal, conductors’ etc. and in other fields/sectors
 - local, regional, national, European, international
- Educational institutions (universities, research institutes, schools, music schools)
- Religious institutions
- Events (festivals, competitions, concerts, training courses etc.)
- Funding bodies (including foundations)
- Companies (including publishers, travel agencies, printers etc, also companies as potential sponsors or for the development of innovative tools)
- Local authorities / local governments / individual politicians
 - local, regional, national, European, international
 - in the fields of culture, education, health, social affairs, migration/integration etc.
- Media
 - local, regional, national, European, international
 - TV, audio, digital, social media, print media

Definition of Collective Singing

We have chosen to use the word “collective singing” for the moment though the group may wish to re-discuss this again at future retreats. Collective singing for us is more inclusive / wider than “choral music” because it includes a bigger diversity of formats of group singing such as vocal ensembles, singing in the classroom, offers for “non-singers” etc. However, it was also reflected by the Singtank that it is a term not easy to use for communication and for reaching out.

A Sustainable Vision for the Sector of collective singing in the next Decade



Introduction

Across the three years during which the Singtank met and worked on this strategy, many things changed in the world and in society. The biggest change was the Covid-19 pandemic which started in early 2020. Not only did it prevent the Singtank members from having a second physical meeting, it also meant that digitisation was no longer a choice but rather a necessity if an organisation or a choir wanted to continue their work. At the same time, the awareness of the dangers of climate change rose substantially, thanks to the Fridays for Future movement, as well as different catastrophes related to climate change.

In general, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) received more attention, and it became more normal for cultural organisations to consider them when working on their visions and strategies. At the same time funding bodies, including the European Union, put a focus on some of the SDGs in their funding programmes.

The European Choral Association was a partner in the project SHIFT, coordinated by the European Music Council and co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Through its participation in this project, the European Choral Association included environmental sustainability as well as inclusion into its strategy and action plan.

The project IGNITE, co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, will run from December 2021 until November 2024 and will also focus on these topics.

The changes above also led to a re-evaluation of the draft strategy of the European Choral Association and its 2021 update.

While this document is trying to formulate a vision and strategic objectives for the sector of collective singing in Europe, we are aware that the situation is and will not be the same in different parts of Europe. Not all issues raised will have the same relevance in all countries, and the need for action will also differ.

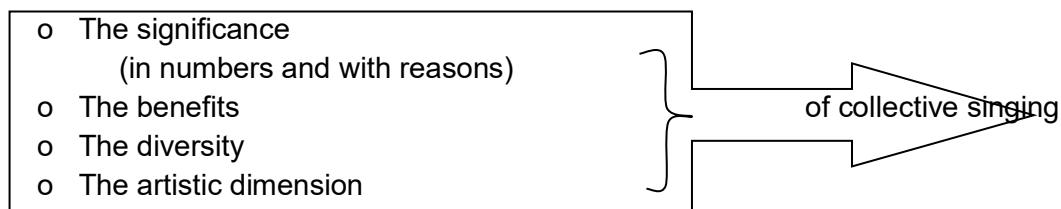
Nevertheless the members of the Singtank believe that the result of their work can help everybody in the sector develop their respective visions, strategies and action plans for the coming decade.

The European Choral Association is planning to establish another Singtank in 2022 which will then work on a follow-up document to be published at the end of 2024.

1. ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION – RAISING AWARENESS

Background (Why?)

- We believe that we need strategies to improve our advocacy work and communication about collective singing because we think we are currently not communicating well enough about it
- Inspired by the European Agenda for Music which speaks about “Music as an art form, a tool and a product”. We want to raise awareness for



- We want to learn to adapt the language of our advocacy and communication work to the languages of the different stakeholders because we do not want to just “preach to the converted” but also - and mostly - reach those who are not convinced yet
- We want to spread a new, modern and fresh image of collective singing
- We need to provide singers with arguments they can use to convince people to support choirs
- We need to show the impact of collective singing on the community, whether social, economic or other
- We need to increase our inter-sectoral visibility
- Collective singing should become part of “Cultural and Creative Industries” so that it can stay relevant

Vision

- **We want everybody to know why collective singing is important and valuable, and to be aware of the benefits of singing**

Strategic Objectives

- To increase the visibility of collective singing
- To improve the image of collective singing
- To increase the awareness for the benefits of collective singing
- To provide the sector with data and arguments which can help awareness-raising
- To advocate for community and amateur arts as an important part of a diverse sector
- To promote access to collective singing and creating more opportunities which offer the experience of collective singing
- To promote collective singing as an instrument for social aims

Action Plan

WHAT should be done? How?	WHO can do this?
<p>Collect more data and research as a basis for our advocacy work / with researchers, collect data on the economic impact of amateur arts, continue collecting data for the Singing Europe study, e.g. on countries not covered, yet, push national governments to collect and share data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Use the data and develop tools (factsheets, advocacy kits etc.) → #BenefitsOfSinging campaign and research review of the European Choral Association 	<p>Research institutes / researchers / choral organisations / music universities</p>
<p>Promote / use the 5 Music Rights of the International Music Council</p>	<p>European Choral Association / other organisations, especially members of the European and International Music Council</p>
<p>Improve the ways in which we communicate (more quality, professional)</p>	<p>European Choral Association / international, national and regional choir associations / choirs and vocal ensembles - together with companies / professionals (e.g. designers, filmmakers, writers)</p>
<p>Gather material and methods for advocacy in one place, which will allow the sector to use them</p>	<p>European Choral Association / national and regional choir associations</p>
<p>Develop new, more attractive, more appealing communication tools: produce / spread great videos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Energetic / fresh / showing a thrilled audience / with surprise elements → With people telling their stories → Collect short films / animated videos about collective singing 	<p>European Choral Association / international, national and regional choir associations / institutions, choirs and vocal ensembles</p> <p>Find a media partner</p> <p>The European Choral Association could use the next European Video Award for this</p>
<p>Work on a new “narrative”, new ways of telling the story of collective singing: collect stories, quotes and pictures to be combined with figures,</p>	<p>European Choral Association / international, national and regional choir associations / choirs and vocal ensembles</p>
<p>Have a team or a person travelling and filming people telling their stories</p>	<p>European Choral Association / international, national and regional choir associations - ideally in cooperation with Media</p>
<p>Use social media for joint flashmobs (Facebook live), get a team of teenagers to manage an Instagram account, make a social media collective that appeals to a wide audience (for education...)</p>	<p>choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / international, national and regional choir associations</p>
<p>Translate our messages into different languages to reach the different stakeholders we want to communicate with</p>	<p>National or regional choral organisations</p>

Offer more opportunities to experience the benefits of singing, introduce collective singing to as many people as possible	international, national and regional choir associations / conductors and vocal leaders / event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles / music educators ...
Let as many people as possible experience the joy of singing (not only in choirs but also through Open Singing, singing with policy makers etc.)	international, national and regional choir associations / conductors and vocal leaders, music educators / event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles Target: Audiences / citizens not (yet) connected to collective singing
Advocate for the needs of the sector and help the sector raise awareness for their needs (the spaces needed, financial needs,)	European Choral Association / international, national and regional choir associations Target: Politicians, governments, local authorities (local, regional, national, European – in the fields of Culture, Education, Health, Social Affairs and other e.g. locally important areas) and the Media
Offer tools to the sector which organisations, institutions and choirs can use to promote and advocate for their own work	European Choral Association / international, national and regional choir associations
Work more together with other sectors / organise projects which include non-choral people and reach regular citizens, as well as possible from other fields of work such as business men, as well as politicians and the media.	international, national and regional choir associations / choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / partners from other sectors
Give more space to collective singing in the media	All media (print, digital, TV, radio, etc.)



www.EuropeanChoralAssociation.org/BenefitsOfSinging

2. Collective Singing as Movement

Background (Why?)

The European Choral Association has been using the term “collective singing” rather than “choral music” for some years, since this term is more inclusive to vocal ensembles, teachers practising classroom singing and those organising social projects with singing as an instrument.

As the European Choral Association found out through the Singing Europe Study published in 2015 (see www.SingingEurope.org), around 37 million people in Europe practice collective singing. They are doing so in many diverse ways, nevertheless they all share their passion for what they are doing.

To establish collective singing as a movement

- we need to be aware that the principle of a movement is that it wants to bring about change in the world
- we need to define what change we want to achieve through collective singing
- we need to connect the different parts of the sector and create a community, increasing everybody's openness for other styles and types of choir
- we want to create a “family feeling” within the sector
- we need examples of all types of collective singing to welcome all backgrounds and levels, showing the full diversity of styles and formats
- we need to connect to organisations representing different styles
- we want to create and strengthen connections in society through collective singing, also inviting those who do not sing (yet)

Vision

- **Connecting the world through collective singing - singing is for everyone!**

Strategic Objectives

- To build the identity of the collective singing movement
- To strengthen the movement
- To reach out and attract more people to collective singing
- To enhance the dialogue between different parts of the sector
- To promote transcultural learning: transporting transcultural values as a result of meeting and exchanging between different traditions (*not just listen to each other but learn from each other and create something new as a result -> transact not only interact*)



37 MILLION CHORAL SINGERS IN EUROPE

www.SingingEurope.org

Action Plan

WHAT should be done? How?	WHO can do this?
Define what change should be achieved - what does collective singing stand for? What connects us in singing? What do we want to bring across as a sector? (use terms such as “togetherness”, “unify people”, etc.)	European Choral Association (strategic approach, create a model / starting point) / other international, national and regional choir associations / institutions on all levels
Empower singers, inspire crowds	conductors and vocal leaders (will have more engaged singers as a result)
Spread the word about the movement, share the joy of being part of it	singers (they are the movement, they can connect to others and increase their feeling of belonging)
Offer opportunities for non-singers to discover the joy of collective singing (public sing-alongs, open singing, flashmobs, collective singing on TV etc.)	international, national and regional choir associations / institutions on all levels / choirs and vocal ensembles / media
Look at synergies with other sectors to attract new singers, e.g. sports (people already sing in football stadiums)	international, national and regional choir associations / institutions on all levels / choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders
Include collective singing in music lessons, with a good quality process, to inspire the next generation and attract students to collective singing	Music educators (they will through this find more singers for their choirs and have more engaged students)
Create opportunities for the dialogue between different parts of the sector, act as facilitators between other stakeholders	European Choral Association (continue what was started between 2018 and 2021 with the Singtank and the Round Table in Tallinn) / other international and European organisations and institutions (this will increase their visibility and sharpen their profile)
Invite each other to events as opportunity to mix target groups, discover other parts of the sector, meet new people and connect to them	European Choral Association / other specialised international and European choral associations / national and regional associations / choirs and vocal ensembles locally
Increase audiences, attract new audiences by offering unusual events, perform in unusual spaces, go to where the audience is, interact with the audience and involve them	international, national and regional choir associations / choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders (they will profit from bigger audiences - the audience will profit from a better experience and will help spread the word)
Improve the support for collective singing activities and the support for choirs and groups	Funding bodies / local, regional, national and European institutions (will get a better return on their investment - including a financial

	<p>return in the case of successful major events)</p> <p>Choral organisations and choirs and vocal ensembles need to provide funding bodies with arguments which make the value of collective singing clear, and they can provide “feel-good-stories”.</p>
Provide the media with information and stories, build partnerships	<p>Choral organisations, choirs and vocal ensembles can provide the stories and find media partners.</p> <p>The role of the media will be to spread the word, contribute to the creation of a bigger audience</p>



3. CONNECTING THROUGH DIGITAL MEANS

Background (Why?)

Digital tools:

- Help optimise the use of resources for the field (time / money / travels / natural resources)
- Facilitate transmission and sharing of knowledge
- Increase access and thus reach people who otherwise could not join, for example, because they could not travel
- Should not replace physical events, rather complement and support them (both through synchronous and asynchronous tools)
- Can lead to digitally supported practices
- Can strengthen the individual aspect of collective singing and co-creation
- Can also contribute to reducing the carbon footprint where physical presence is not essential (in training) or in order to prepare physical events
- Make international cooperation easier and can lead to more cooperation
- open opportunities for new creative ideas (new platforms, increased cooperation)

However: this is not a magic wand. Real life interaction is essential in our field. Yet, digital tools allow us to use this costly “real life” time for high-value interaction.

A lot happened in the field of digital communication tools for virtual rehearsals and concerts during the Covid-19 pandemic and we learned about the value and possibilities of digital tools - we need to continue following the development, contributing to it in order to keep this impetus.

We need to learn better how to use digital tools to collect data on different issues.

We need to address the fears that can be connected to digitisation. e.g. to inspire digital literacy ...

We should look at youth culture and digital media and how communication changes, so that we don't lose connection.

Vision

- **Use digital means to connect, cooperate and share, while optimising the use of resources**

Strategic Objectives

- To increase the use of digital tools where it can be helpful and makes sense
- to build on the progress made during the Covid-19 pandemic
- To enhance new creative ways of using digital tools
- To offer capacity building
- To promote the use of digital tools as supportive practices (combining face-to-face, synchronous and asynchronous online)
- To support ways of increasing positive digital and hybrid experiences and offer training on how to do so
- To highlight that the tools should be used where it can be helpful and makes sense, as supportive practices, not replacing face-to-face events



Action Plan

WHAT should be done? How?	WHO can do this?
Upgrade communication tools	The whole sector (organisations, institutions, choirs and vocal ensembles, etc.)
Follow and foster the development of low latency internet access points across Europe, allowing for “real time” interaction.	international, national and regional choir associations / institutions on all levels
Support the development of tools, platforms and programmes, especially with a view of how useful they are for collective singing.	international, national and regional choir associations / institutions on all levels
Upgrade data, membership and project management tools	The whole sector (organisations, institutions, choirs and vocal ensembles, etc.)
Cooperate with different target groups, providers and associates (conductors, other organisations)	The whole sector (organisations, institutions, choirs and vocal ensembles, etc.)
Offer remote training (webinars, tutorials, one-to-one-training)	Training providers (international, national and regional choir associations / institutions on all levels / formal and informal training)
Offer training on the use of digital tools in the best possible way.	Training providers (international, national and regional choir associations / institutions on all levels / formal and informal training)
Offer remote rehearsals	Conductors, vocal leaders, etc.
Offer remote performances bringing together performers from different cities/countries (e.g. using LoLa, or using other tools / methods)	Performance providers / music universities and conservatories (which are connected by LoLa)
Digitalise governance (flatten hierarchies, more peer-to-peer cooperation with the help of digital tools)	international, national and regional choir associations
Mutualise resources (databases)	international, national and regional choir associations
Organise creative virtual choir projects	Choirs, vocal ensembles / international, national and regional choir associations
Open physical events to online participation (hybrid events and performances)	Choirs, vocal ensembles / international, national and regional choir associations
Address digital resistance by offering training and introductory sessions making digital tools accessible	Choirs, vocal ensembles / international, national and regional choir associations

4. INCLUSION

Background (Why?)

- Collective singing is about bringing different people together, different voices, different ways of life, to create art together
- By diversity, we mean the presence of differences, which may relate to characteristics or background (for example, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other statuses). We aim to achieve inclusion, namely, the presence, participation and empowerment of people from marginalised groups in all types of roles in the sector of collective singing, including in decision-making positions.
- Yet, the sector is not reflective of the diversity of society. Better representation of people from marginalised groups would demonstrate that collective singing is for everyone and not just for the privileged few. No one should feel that collective singing is not for people like them.
- It guarantees that what the sector has to offer meets the expectations of younger generations and new populations, thereby expanding its outreach and enhancing its vitality. A greater diversity of types of choirs in combination with choirs with a greater diversity of singers would help spread the values of collective singing (openness, sharing, creativity, discipline) to all parts of society.
- Diversity in this context also means supporting a diversity of styles of collective singing, and not bringing everybody to do the same kind of music
- Collective singing must be accessible for everybody, which means making it available in different ways, through different projects and activities which offer the experience of collective singing.

Vision

- **To facilitate access to collective singing for everybody, irrespective of identities, skills or background.**

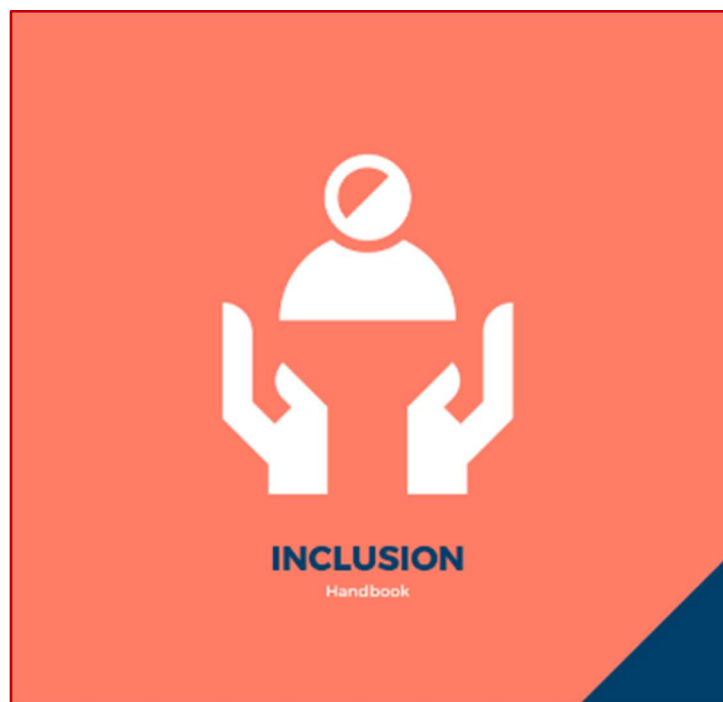
Strategic Objectives

- To listen to the needs, wishes and experiences of people from marginalised groups and collaborate with them to determine actions to advance inclusion within the sector of collective singing
- To increase diversity across the sector and across different roles and different levels in the sector
- To raise the awareness of the need for inclusion of people from marginalised groups in all areas and activities of the sector, including unconscious exclusion
- To increase inclusion within the activities of the European Choral Association and other activities in the sector
- To amplify the voices of people from marginalised groups and learn from them, by engaging specialists for training on inclusion and diversity issues
- To connect to and partner with organisations outside the sector of collective singing dealing with issues of inclusion
- To help reduce cultural colonialism and cultural appropriation and offer tools on how to avoid them

Action Plan

WHAT should be done? How?	WHO can do this?
Provoke debate and self reflection in the sector, raising awareness of established but outdated norms and unconscious bias, through communications and training: Deliver training on specific skills for group leaders and organisers by bringing in experts from marginalised groups	international, national and regional choir associations / media especially within the sector / choirs and vocal ensembles / project organisers
Don't communicate and talk "on behalf" of people from marginalised groups but invite them to speak / listen to them	international, national and regional choir associations / media in the sector / choirs and vocal ensembles / project organisers
Engage experts from marginalised groups to carry out training on inclusion	European choral organisation and other international, national and regional/local organisations and institutions dealing with collective singing
Raise awareness and improve inclusion within ensembles through events that include singers, vocal leaders, cultural managers, composers etc. from marginalised groups, such as the series of Hearts-in-Harmony concerts and festivals	European choral organisation and other international, national and regional/local organisations dealing with collective singing
Increase representation of marginalised groups in choirs, ensembles and projects.	Choirs and vocal ensembles / schools and music schools / project organisers
Train the sector in adapting events to become more inclusive (e.g. to disabilities, to different life rhythms, adaption of repertoire to different cultural origins - also to those who cannot read music, adaptation of financial conditions to balance social inequalities)	European choral organisation and other international, national and regional/local organisations and institutions dealing with collective singing
Improve outreach beyond existing participants in collective singing to show people that they are welcome in the sector of collective singing	choirs and vocal ensembles / local and regional choral organisations
Design inclusive strategies for choirs/vocal ensembles adapted to their specificities	choirs and vocal ensembles, not only in the amateur world, also professional choirs and ensembles
Address the danger of cultural colonialism and cultural appropriation, offer tools and mechanisms e.g. by including people who can make sure music from other cultures is done in an authentic way	international, national and regional choir associations / media especially within the sector - Target: conductors and vocal leaders, music educators
Deliver training on specific skills for group leaders and organisers by bringing in experts from marginalised groups	European choral organisation and other international, national and regional/local organisations and institutions dealing with collective singing / training institutions
Disseminate and promote existing resources, such as the handbooks of the Sing Me In project (www.SingMeIn.eu) and the results of the results of	European Choral Association and its member organisations as well as other choral organisations / the media

the SHIFT project concerning inclusion (www.shift-culture.eu)	
Improve the inclusiveness of communication, including specialised terms in our sector, for example using terms such as “collective singing” and “vocal leaders” instead of “choirs” and “conductors”	European Choral Association and its member organisations as well as other choral organisations / media especially within the sector
Establish a DEI&B (diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging) working group of people from marginalised groups active in the sector of collective singing to guide the DEI&B initiatives of the European Choral Association	European Choral Association
When advertising for positions in the sector, make sure to show that there is an openness to diversity through an inclusion statement	European Choral Association and its member organisations as well as other choral organisations / media especially within the sector



5. Networking and Cooperating

Background (Why?)

- Our dream is to enrich ourselves, learn from each other, internationalise, showcase more, get and share new waves of inspiration, create new ways of motivation for singers, and come together in bigger events.
- There are two types of networking and cooperation, the first being inside the sector, the second outside the sector. To be able to network, first we should define ourselves in the most comprehensive way, going outside the box from our 'classical' thinking that singing is easy, cheap and accessible, also emphasising that singing needs effort, professionalism and also a good process of training.
- To reach out beyond the sector, we need to find another way of telling the story and build new leadership methods (encouraging the singer to be choral leaders of the next century).

Vision

- **Creating meaningful encounters within various stakeholders of choral music and to the outside world that initiate new opportunities and provide flow of valuable information**

Strategic Objectives

- To offer networking opportunities within the sector
- To increase networking beyond the sector
- To create and disseminate tools for networking
- To promote cooperation within the sector
- To encourage cross-sectorial cooperation
(with other art forms but also with science, sports etc.)

Action Plan

WHAT should be done? How?	WHO can do this?
Use the "Friends" association as a space for "alumni" of the European Choral Association, including former members of the board, youth committee and music commissions, event organisers etc. to spread information and get expertise in a continuous way and create a strong network	European Choral Association - also its member organisations / the people mentioned on the left
Create platforms online and offline to meet and encourage personal encounters, encourage (also online) networking through these new platforms.	international, national and regional choir associations / institutions dealing with collective singing at all levels
Encourage singers to talk more about choral music, get attention, create new bonds, initiate partnerships, since we are one of the few sectors that possess members from many different occupations.	Individual singers (every singer is a potential 'networker' and ambassador of collective singing)
Offer training that will help create new leaders/ambassadors of choral music	choral organisations and institutions on all levels / training institutions

Interview non-choral people or invite different sectors to the conferences of choral organisation (and attend their conferences) in order to open up new ways of connecting to the outside world	international, national and regional choir associations / institutions dealing with collective singing at all levels
Create strong partnerships with “singing schools” or “singing companies” that can provide a flow of resources more efficiently than other actors (e.g. knowledge, expertise or infrastructure)	international, national and regional choir associations / institutions dealing with collective singing at all levels
Initiate multidisciplinary camps, building ties between different artforms, train new ‘translators’ in the field to get into dialogue with political actors, work on databases to produce meaningful information that helps all the actors in the field	international, national and regional choir associations / institutions dealing with collective singing at all levels
Encourage choirs and ensembles and their conductors / leaders to get into dialogue with others, also some of the other stakeholders from inside the sector (voice teachers, pedagogues, language coaches, body / movement coaches, choreographers, light / sound designers, sound engineers, etc.).	Choirs and vocal ensembles (they are very important in the sense of collaboration, mutual learning processes, and contact to other art forms) / conductors and vocal leaders - the encouragement can also / or has to come from international, national and regional choir associations / institutions dealing with collective singing at all levels



Joining Forces

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6. Format and Contents Development

Background (Why?)

- A strategy has to be forward-looking, not just showing what is the status quo
- Innovation is an important element to bring collective singing to the next level
- Even if the collection of ideas below is not entirely new, it can still be useful and can be new to some actors in the sector
- collective singing is one of the most versatile artforms - its potential can be further unlocked through development of format and contents

Vision

- **To bring collective singing to the next level**

Strategic Objectives

- To increase the diversity of artistic impression
- To use the potential of choirs and ensembles for developing new formats
- To encourage the development of new creative formats
- To foster formats which increase audience involvement
- To support formats that underline the social impact of collective singing
- To increase cooperation between the amateur and the professional world, as well as with other art forms and other disciplines

Action Plan

WHAT should be done? How?	WHO can do this?
Increase the interaction between performers and audiences involving non-singers, and encourage and promote activities which do so	conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Design new concert formats as a way of attracting and building new audiences	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Use unusual venues for performances	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Organise pop-up events (flashmobs, spontaneous performances etc.)	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Organise performances which connect people (performers and audiences) digitally	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Develop international cooperation projects through / with the help of Facebook live	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers

Develop new / create virtual choir projects	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers / international, national and regional choral organisations
Create small intimate performance formats (e.g. “living room concerts”)	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Build on the “bring a friend” concept to get more people to rehearsals / into choirs and ensembles	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Design performances with multiple choirs	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Use improvisation (while making sure it remains interesting for the audience) and train conductors/vocal leaders on how to do this	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers Training could be offered by international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Develop the use of the increasing possibilities of using amplification in performances, also for classical or traditional choirs and offer training on how to do this.	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers Training could be offered by international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Increase cooperation between the amateur sector and the professional sector	professional choirs and ensembles / non-professional, choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Increase cooperation with other fields (other art forms, sports, science etc.)	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Organise Beatbox battles	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers
Use choir memes in communication, use humour to create a different image of choirs / collective singing	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / media in the sector
Create new trends and revise old ones for example World Choral Day	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions For World Choral Day: IFCM
Create a map for musicians containing the best bars in town where you can make music without “disturbing” other guests or the owner	choirs and vocal ensembles / conductors and vocal leaders / project organisers / local tourist institutions
Encourage the shift from choral conducting towards choral/vocal leadership	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions



7. Music Education

Background (Why?)

- Every person should have the opportunity to experience collective singing and to learn and improve their singing throughout their lives
- Education should provide empowerment through artistic expression
- The first step into collective singing needs to be made easier
- A mental shift in the image of singing is necessary

Vision

- **Every person should have the opportunity to learn and experience collective singing as part of quality music education in school and beyond**

Strategic Objectives

- To reach a change in education / choir pedagogy based on a new kind of leadership
- To enter into dialogue with curriculum makers and those responsible for school administration
- To encourage more education in teams, cooperation among educators
- To modernise music education including concepts of “mediation”, “outreach” and “access”
- To promote diversity among teachers and invite representatives of diverse cultures to teach authentic ways of singing music from different origins
- To foster a discussion on hierarchies and values in music education
- To advocate for participatory music education and good quality educational processes
- To encourage more singing in schools
- To raise awareness for the benefits of music education and the benefits of singing (cf. research collected for the #BenefitsofSinging campaign of the European Choral Association in 2021).
- To ensure quality music education with participatory music-making and singing, with high-quality educators and a high-quality educational process
- To make sure that decision-makers are aware of the benefits of singing (see #BenefitsofSinging campaign also mentioned under advocacy above)
- To increase singing in schools



Action Plan

WHAT should be done? How?	WHO can do this?
Develop a less hierarchical communication in singing groups and in the various education processes	conductors and vocal leaders / music educators
Train teachers and conductors to have more skills in leading choirs / singing groups and transmitting high artistic experiences	teacher-training-institutions (music-education at all levels, vocal-pedagogues, conducting)
Open more spaces in schools and choirs for creativity	Schools / conductors and vocal leaders / music educators
Open more spaces in schools for singing and singing related projects, introduce a “daily singing minute” in every school	Schools / conductors and vocal leaders / music educators
Create / develop structures that allow everyone to be a part of a singing community	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / schools
Provide adequate equipment for collective singing in schools (rehearsal rooms, risers, instruments)	schools and local authorities
Open schools to the communities, create stronger links with community music	Schools / school administrations / music educators, community musicians
Develop strategies for the training / educating of audiences, venues, communities, suppliers, partners and supporters	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Meet with curriculum-makers, school administrations and teacher training institutions concerning most of the strategic objectives mentioned above, especially to advocate for participatory music education and good quality educational processes	Especially national and regional choral organisations and institutions / music educators in schools / European organisations such as EAS and EMU
To foster discussion on hierarchies and values in music education	teacher-training-institutions / international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Disseminate / share advocacy material on benefits of collective singing (also see chapter 1)	teacher-training-institutions / international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / music educators / conductors and vocal leaders /
Offer life-long learning opportunities in the field of collective singing	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / music schools / adult education institutions

8. Environmental Sustainability - In Harmony with Nature

Background (Why?)

- We believe that the collective singing sector can promote certain values
- We believe that nature is an issue for everybody
- Our aim should be to reach equality in nature
- We ARE nature, there is no option/choice but to think about it and act
- Singing is something natural
- The issue of environmental sustainability has become more important since 2018, with the Fridays for Future movement and more climate-based catastrophes, a higher awareness in society for the need to act
- As a result choirs and organisations have realised that they need to deal with this topic, too

Vision

- **We want everybody in the sector to connect environmental sustainability to collective singing**

Strategic Objectives

- To promote the use of collective singing as an instrument for raising awareness on environmental sustainability
- To help promoting the UN Sustainable Development Goals which deal with climate change and the environment
- To increase knowledge of environmental sustainability and the need for new international legislation
- To make use of the vast network of collective singing in order to spread knowledge and train the sector
- To align practices of the sector to environmental sustainability and present organisations in the sector as role models ("walking the talk")



Action Plan

WHAT should be done? How?	WHO can do this?
Increase the use of collective singing in relation to the topic of environmental sustainability	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles
Share examples of good practice	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / media
Develop methodologies	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Organise collective singing events to help raise awareness, including some bigger-scale actions, to help advocate for the need for international law	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles
Connect scientists to artistic work / cooperate on artistic projects about environmental sustainability	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / choirs and vocal ensembles
Organise more local and regional events to reduce transportation	event organisers
Consider where digital tools may help reduce travel	event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles
Think before you print	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / conductors and vocal leaders / administrative staff
Spread the knowledge, offer training on the topic	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers
Use existing network / participants / audiences to spread and support campaigns	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers
Consult and promote existing tools and guidelines, e.g. http://musicdriveschange.com/eco-artist/	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers
Read and apply UN guidelines and other guidelines on how to reduce the carbon footprint of your organisation / event: https://unfccc.int/climate-action/climate-neutral-now	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers
Develop specific guidelines for events in the field of collective singing	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers

Commission songs about issues concerning the rights of nature <i>(we had a spontaneous offer from a composer on facebook after publishing first results of the Singtank there)</i>	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles
Do fundraising concerts / campaigns	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles
Avoid plastic / reduce packaging /recycle	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles
Reduce the amount of food offered / offer vegetarian food as standard option and ask people to tick if they want to eat meat / donate leftover food	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles
Inform audiences, make them allies	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers / choirs and vocal ensembles
Research environmental effects of their events	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions / event organisers / researchers
Serve as role models, review their own carbon footprint	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Use their network to raise awareness for issues related to nature	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Go through a green certification process (the European Choral Association was a partner in the SHIFT project co-funded by Erasmus+ in the frame of which such a certification process for networks was developed)	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Offer training about environmental sustainability (the European Choral Association will do this in the coming years, starting from the outcomes of the SHIFT project)	international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Introduce sustainable measures, act ecologically, raise awareness, be a role model (ACT more than TALK, walk the talk)	event organisers
Provide experiences of singing in nature	choirs and vocal ensembles / singers
Fundraise for good causes in this field, raise awareness	choirs and vocal ensembles / singers

Be role models, influence the “working culture” of the choirs, spread the “artistic message”	conductors and vocal leaders
Engage singers, the medial, other stakeholders	conductors and vocal leaders
Compose songs about the topics to help raise awareness	Composers and arrangers
Include the issue of the rights of nature in their education / raise awareness	Music educators
Provide and disseminate research, e.g. on innovative methods of transportation that are more ecological (e.g. aeroplanes powered by solar energy)	Researchers / international, national and regional choral organisations and institutions
Make choices (e.g. consciously choose ecological events, choose more ecological ways of reaching events)	Audiences
Support event organisers in their ecological measures/aims, spread the word, create support groups	Audiences
Support the cause (also as non-singers)	Citizens in general, nature lovers

“I love to hear a choir. I love the humanity... to see the faces of real people devoting themselves to a piece of music. I like the teamwork. It makes me feel optimistic about the human race when I see them cooperating like that.”
Paul McCartney

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