The value of cultural and leisure activities for citizens and communities in the municipalities participating in the 6-city collaboration

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APRIL 2025

Photo: Robin Skjoldborg

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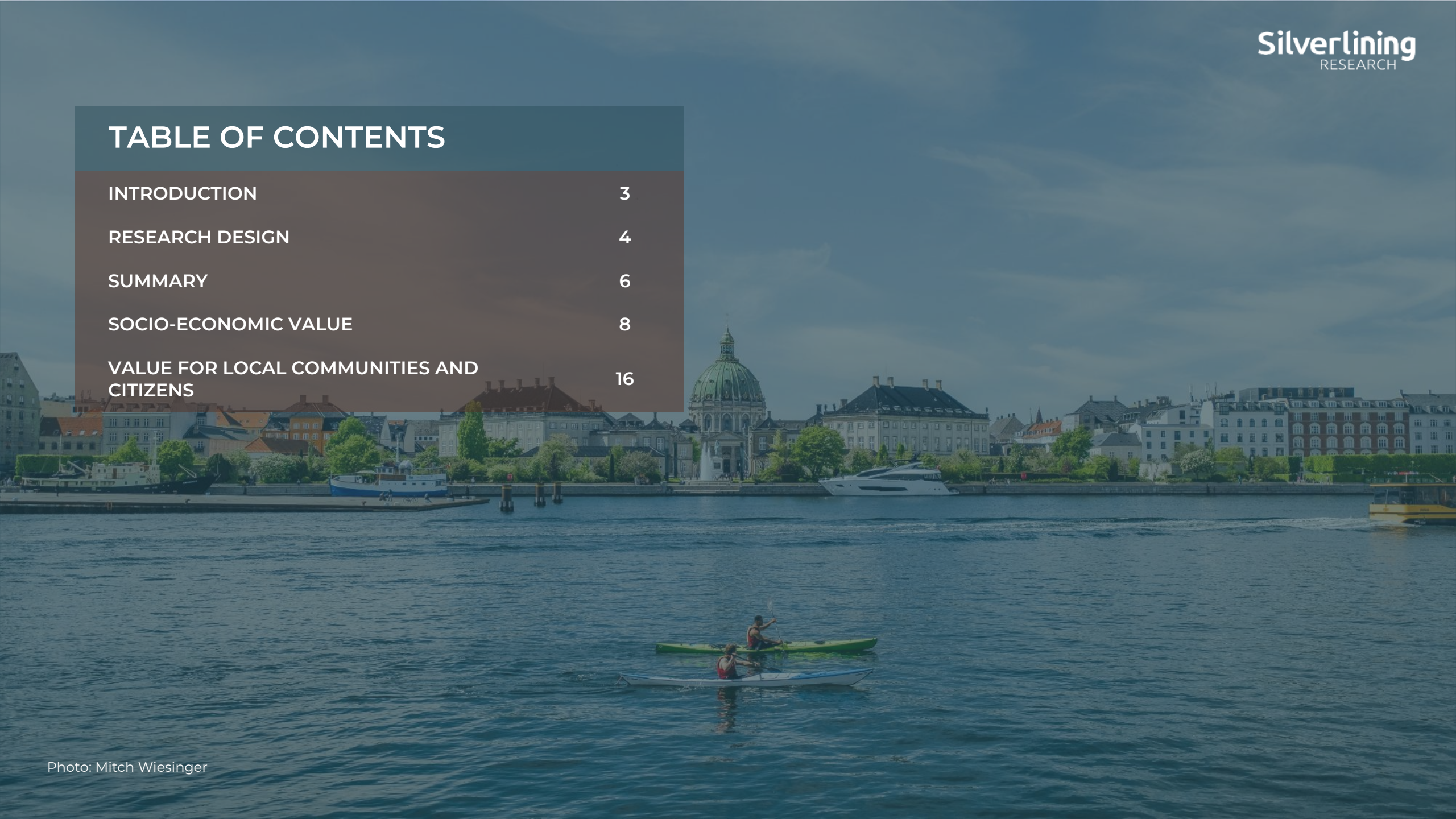


Photo: Mitch Wiesinger

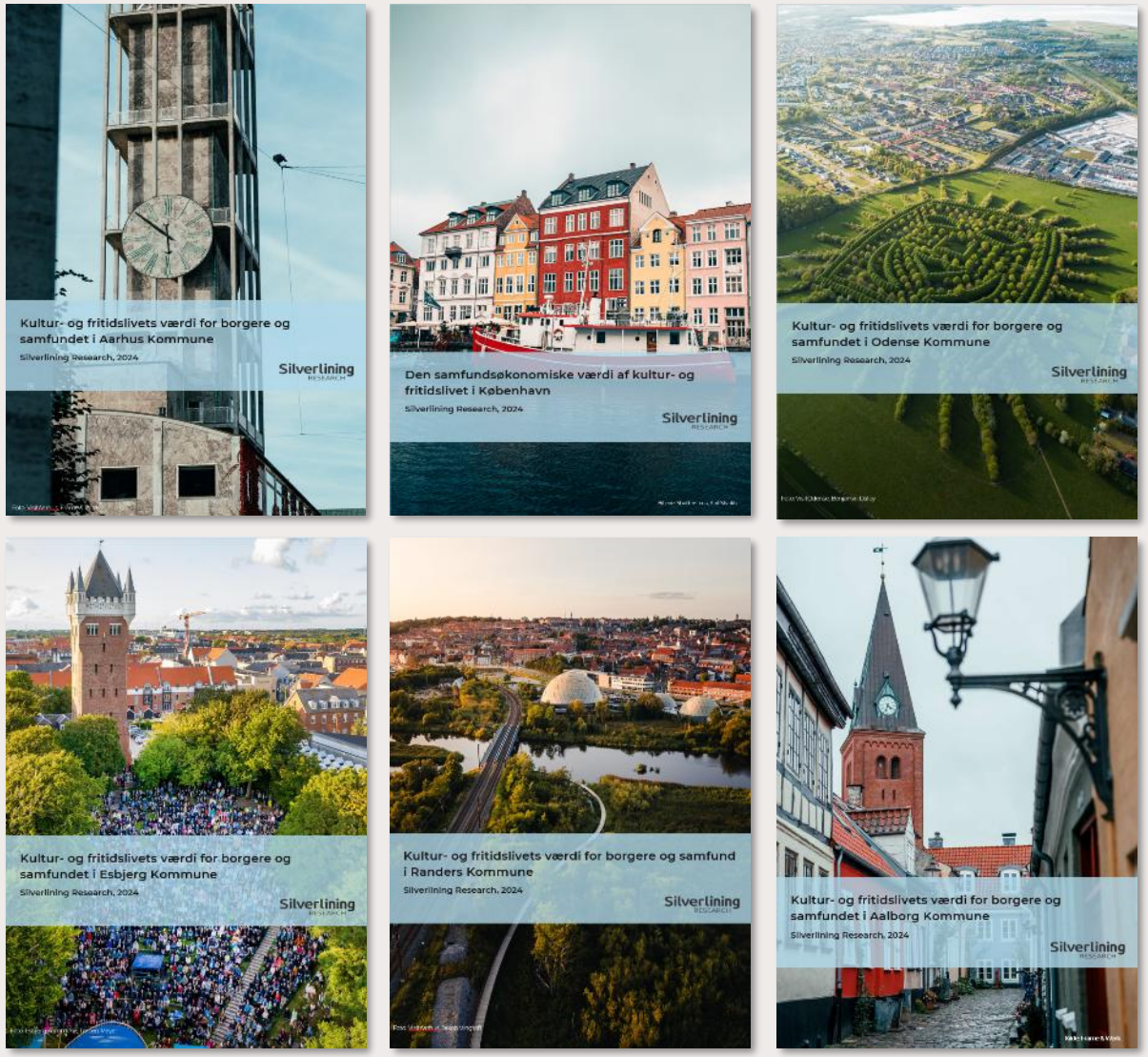
INTRODUCTION

Denmark has a tradition of rich and diverse cultural and leisure activities. The strong focus on culture and leisure is evident in Danish municipalities, where cultural and leisure activities engage citizens and attract visitors. However, the key question is to what extent cultural and leisure activities create value for individuals and society?

The six largest Danish municipalities have asked the consulting firm Silverlining Research to conduct a comprehensive survey of the value and significance of culture and leisure activities for citizens and society.

To accomplish this task, Silverlining Research, in collaboration with the municipalities, conducted a study combining questionnaire surveys among citizens in the municipalities and economic calculations based on the SAM-K/LINE model. This provides a robust basis for assessing both the economic value and the social benefits for citizens.

This report presents a selection of the main results from the analyses with comparisons across the municipalities in the 6-city collaboration. In the autumn and winter of 2024, the municipalities of Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense, Aalborg, Esbjerg, and Randers each received a report with in-depth analyses of their own results. If you are interested in more detailed results, methodological explanations, and data sources, please refer to the municipality-specific reports.



RESEARCH DESIGN (I)

To provide a nuanced insight into the importance of the culture and leisure sector, Silverlining Research has designed a study that combines questionnaire surveys and economic calculations of the socio-economic value of the sector.

Socio-economic values in SAM-K/LINE

The study includes an analysis of the socio-economic values of culture and leisure, focusing on gross value added, employment. and tax revenue calculated using the regional economic model SAM-K/LINE, which is owned and operated by the Centre for Regional and Tourism Research (CRT).

Survey among citizens

In addition, more than 11,800 citizens in five of the municipalities[1] responded to a questionnaire regarding the significance and value of cultural life for the local community and the social and individual value created for citizens. Among other things, the survey maps how cultural and leisure activities contribute to the municipalities being perceived as a good place to live, and the perceived utility value for citizens is estimated using the Contingent Valuation Method (CVM), which is used to measure a population's perceived utility value for public goods. An explanation of this method is included in the individual reports.

Together, the design provides a broad and nuanced insight into the cultural and leisure activities in the municipalities in the 6-city collaboration.

[1]The City of Copenhagen did not participate in the questionnaire survey and is therefore not included in analyses based on questionnaire data.

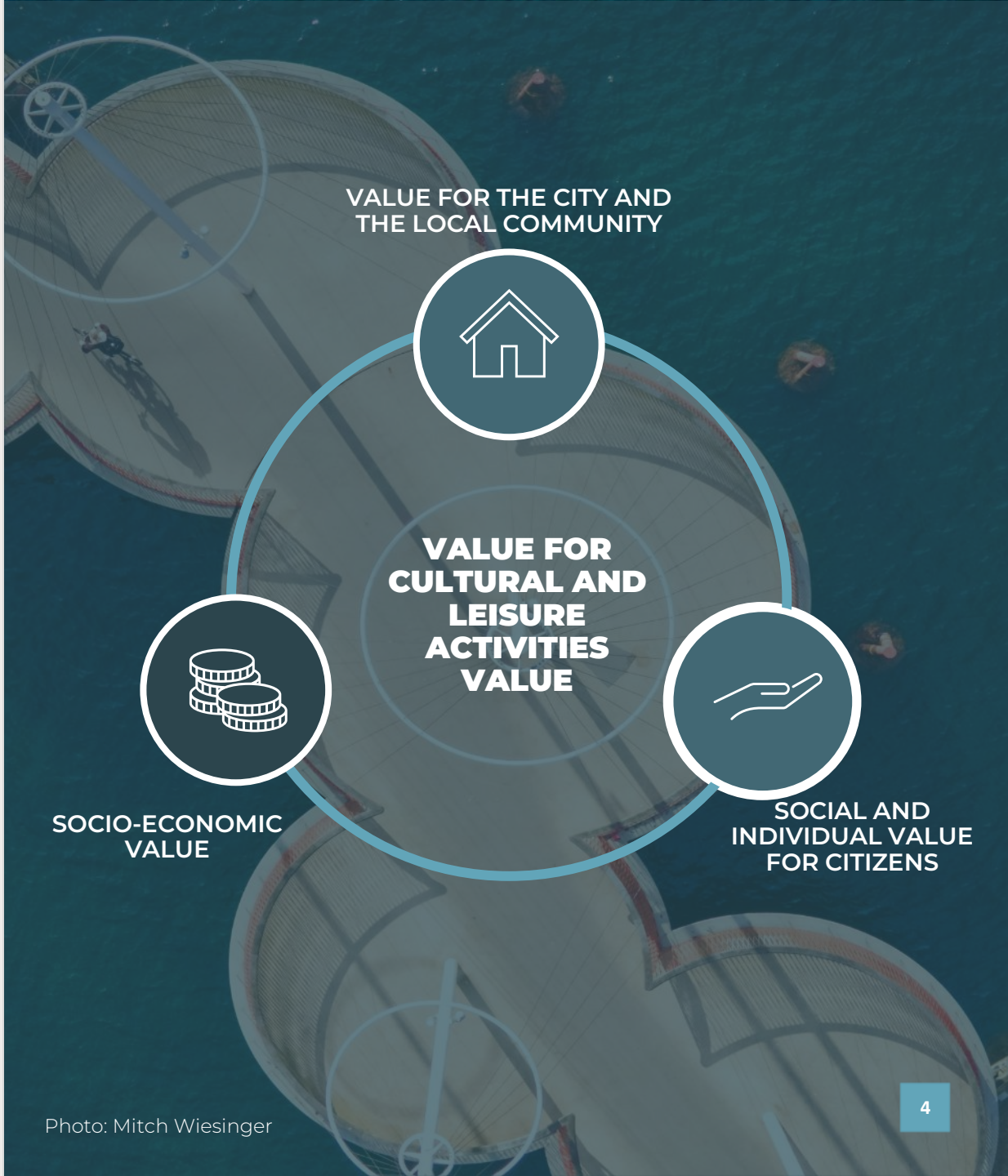


Photo: Mitch Wiesinger

RESEARCH DESIGN (II)

Subject area

The subject area of the study is the total production and available offerings in the cultural and leisure sector in the municipalities. This includes offerings, activities, and facilities across the entire cultural and leisure sector, regardless of whether they are run by private companies, organised by the municipalities, or supported by voluntary initiatives.

The aim is to provide a holistic view of the cultural and leisure sector, which offers a diverse range of activities and services and is run by many different actors.

How to interpret the results

Readers should be aware that the results across municipalities are a snapshot and may vary over time depending on local conditions.

Care should also be taken when comparing municipalities, as they have different basic conditions in terms of the location of state cultural institutions and private radio and television productions. For example, the National Museum, Nordisk Film TV A/S, and the National Gallery of Denmark are all located in the Municipality of Copenhagen. Therefore, this report should be seen more as a compilation of the results from six individual reports.

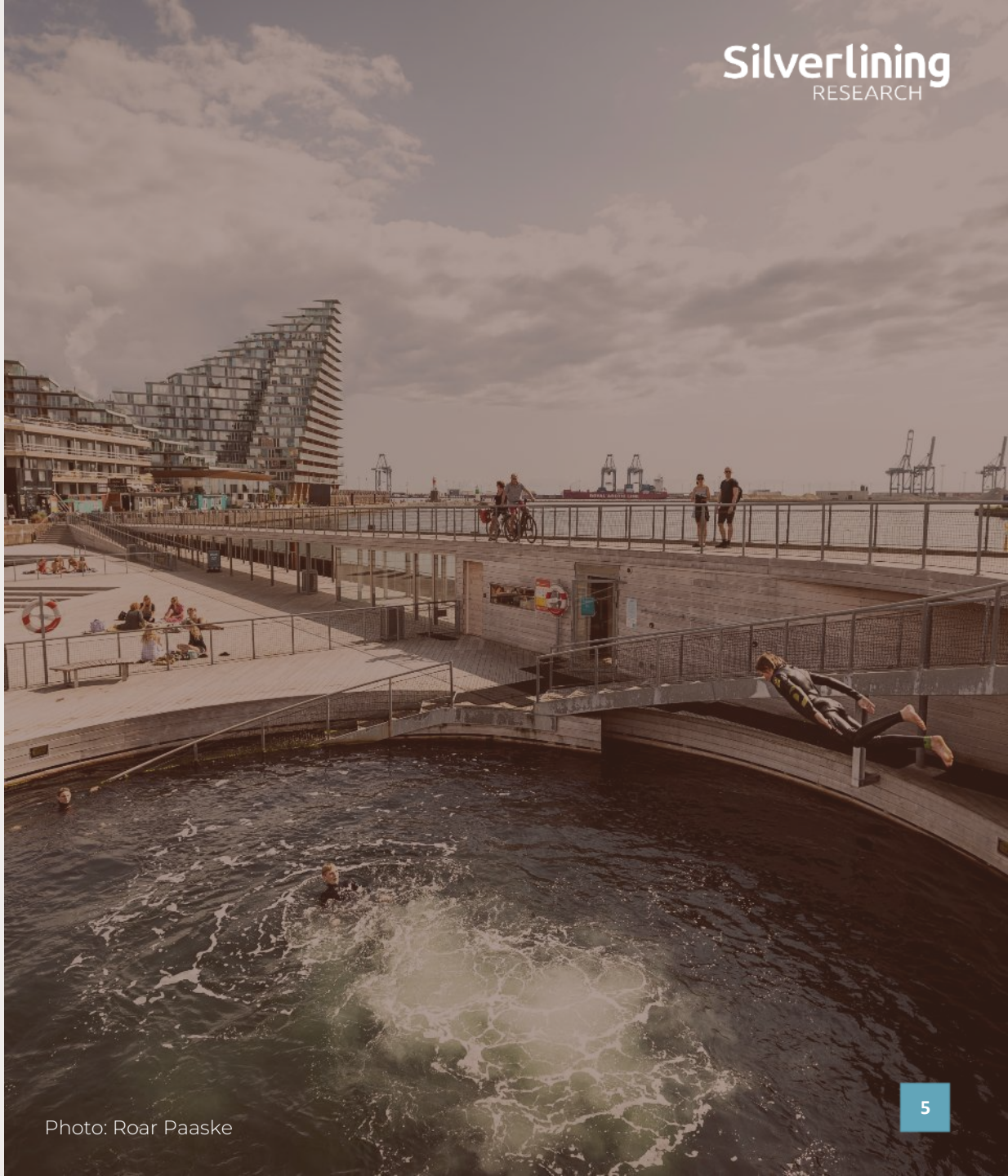


Photo: Roar Paaske

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Culture and leisure activities not only have entertainment and educational value in themselves but also contribute significantly to the economy and generate economic activity throughout the country.

Creates substansial added value

The culture and leisure sector in the six municipalities generated a total of **EUR 7.4 billion** in gross value added in 2022 across the country.

Of this, approximately EUR 4.4 1 billion (59%) was created directly through activities in the culture and leisure sector in the municipalities, while EUR 3.05 billion (41%) was generated through derived activities elsewhere in the economy.

Securing employment

Across municipalities, the cultural and leisure sector has secured employment for **80,161 people** across the country.

Of these, 51,264 people (64%) are employed as a result of direct production in the cultural and leisure sector in the six municipalities, while 28,897 people (36%) are employed as a result of derived production elsewhere in the economy.

Contributing to tax revenue

Overall, the cultural and leisure sector in the six municipalities has generated a total of **EUR 2.68 billion** in tax revenue across the country in 2022.

Of this, approximately EUR 1.26 billion (47%) was generated as a result of direct production in the cultural and leisure industries, while approximately EUR 1.42 billion (53%) was generated through derived production.

Photo: Utzon Centre (2008) – Jørn Utzon and Kim Utzon.
Photographer: Bang Clemme Film & Openhouse

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In addition to the financial contributions, citizens feel that culture and leisure activities are an important factor for the local community, including the attractiveness of cities, citizens' well-being and citizenship in municipalities.

Cultural and leisure activities contribute to municipalities being perceived as good places to live

Across the municipalities, a large proportion of respondents mention that cultural life and leisure, and community activities are reasons why the municipality is a good place to live.

Citizens use various types of cultural and leisure activities, with the most popular across municipalities including outdoor life, parks, etc. and cinemas.

Personal utility value of culture and leisure activities that citizens are willing to pay for

The average perceived utility value for citizens varies between EUR 20.8 and EUR 23 per month across municipalities.

Citizens therefore consider culture and leisure to be so important that they are willing to increase their tax payments in order to preserve cultural and leisure activities.

Cultural and leisure activities contribute to citizens' well-being and strengthen citizenship

Cultural and leisure activities contribute significantly to citizens' well-being and quality of life, which many rate as good or very good. They also promote citizenship and democracy, as emphasised in the report's findings.

Overall, culture and leisure strengthen both individual and societal values.

Photo: Daniel Villadsen

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VALUE

Photo: Daniel Villadsen

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VALUE CREATED WITHIN THE CULTURAL AND LEISURE INDUSTRIES CREATES RIPPLES AND AFFECTS OTHER PARTS OF THE ECONOMY. THE ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS THEREFORE DIVIDES THE EFFECTS INTO THREE TYPES

Direct effects refer to the immediate economic activity that occurs as a result of an event or offer in the cultural and leisure sector.

For example, when a concert is held, direct effects are created through ticket sales, employee salaries, payments to artists, and other expenses related to the operation of the concert venue.

Indirect effects describe the economic activities that arise in related industries that supply goods and services to the cultural and leisure sector.

For example, when a concert is held, the concert venue purchases goods and services from other companies, such as sound equipment, catering, transport, or cleaning services.

Induced effects refer to the additional economic activity that occurs when wages and income generated in connection with an activity are spent further in society.

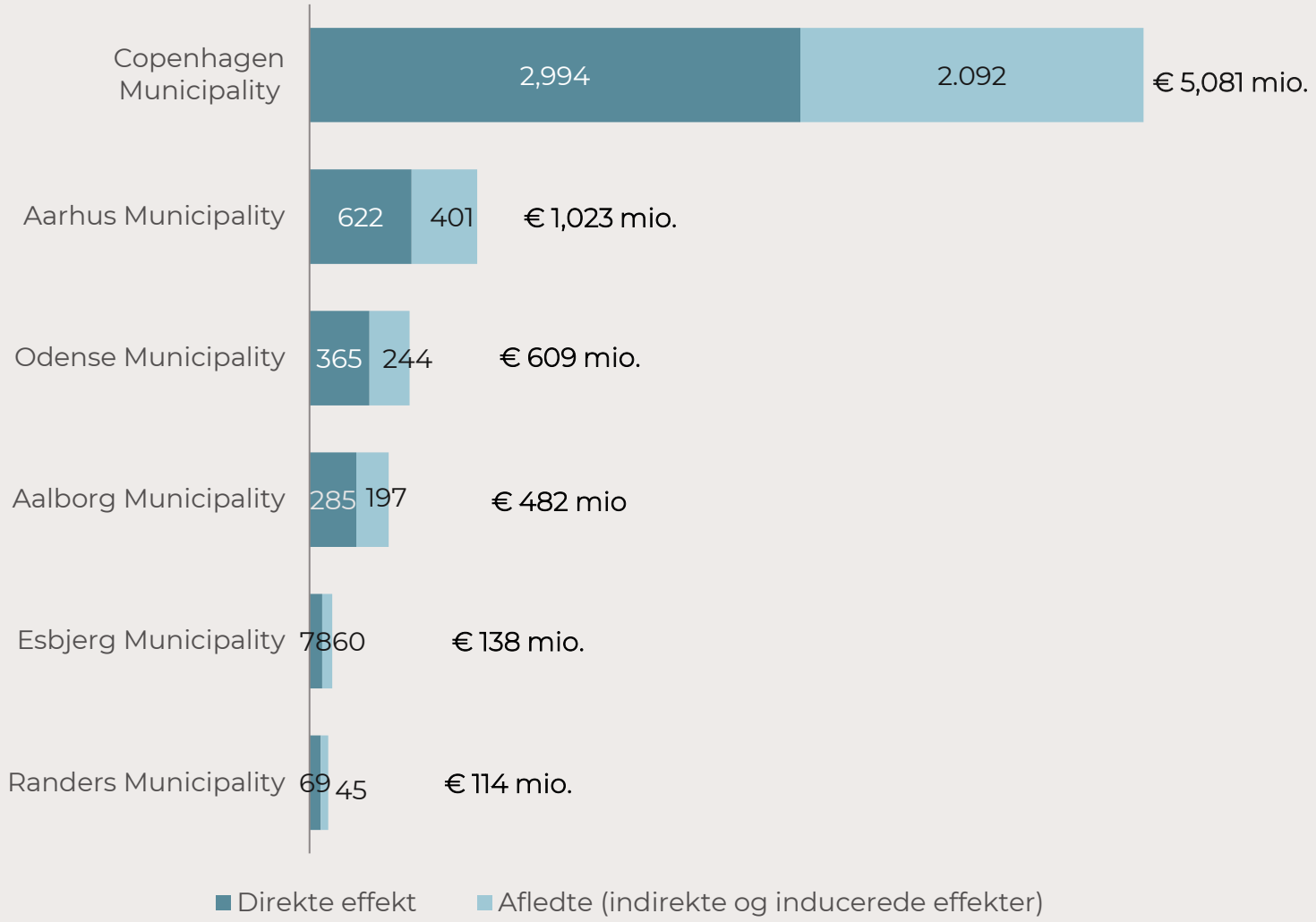
For example, when employees working in the cultural and leisure sector (direct effects) or in related industries that supply goods and services (indirect effects) receive wages, they spend these wages on products or services such as food and entertainment.

OVER 7.4 BILLION GENERATED IN GROSS VALUE ADDED

The cultural and leisure industries in the municipalities have contributed EUR 7,451.2 million to the total gross value added generated throughout the country.

Of this, EUR 4,396.2 million (59%) was generated directly through activities in the cultural and leisure sector in the municipalities, while EUR 3,055 million (41%) came from knock-on effects that occur when money from cultural and leisure activities is spent elsewhere in the economy – for example, when a concert-goer also eats at a restaurant or stays at a hotel.

Total gross value added generated throughout the country in 2022 based on cultural and leisure activities in the municipalities in the 6-city collaboration, EUR million.



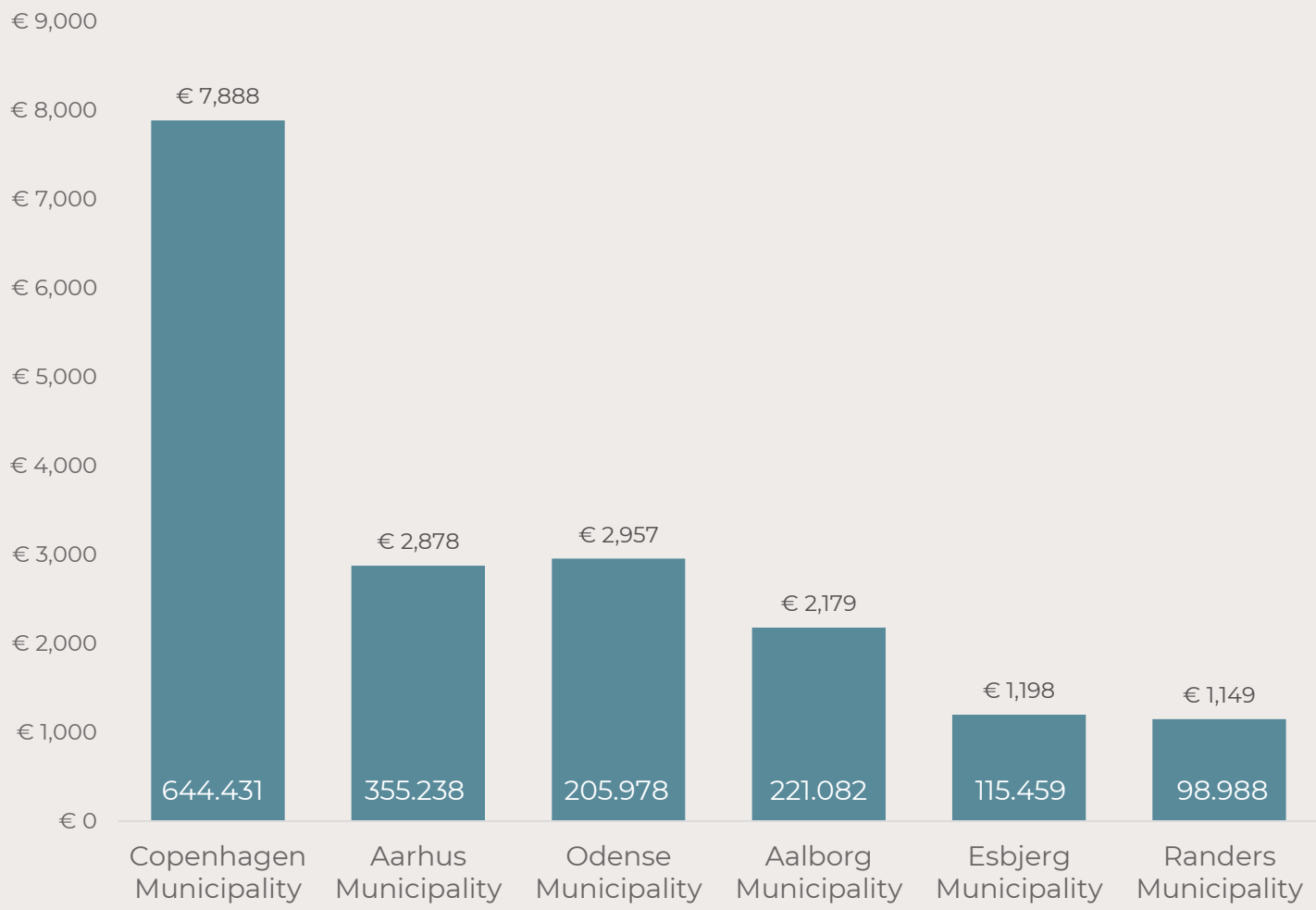
Source: SAM-K/LINE (CRT). Note: Value added follows the National Accounts' definition of gross value added at current prices. The figures in the figure are rounded to the nearest million EUR.

GROSS VALUE GENERATED CALCULATED PER CAPITA IN THE MUNICIPALITIES

The figure shows the gross value added generated by cultural and leisure activities per capita in the six municipalities in the 6-city collaboration.

The gross value added includes both direct effects and derived effects, including both indirect and induced effects.

Total gross value generated across the country in 2022 based on cultural and leisure activities in the municipalities in the 6-city collaboration, EUR per capita



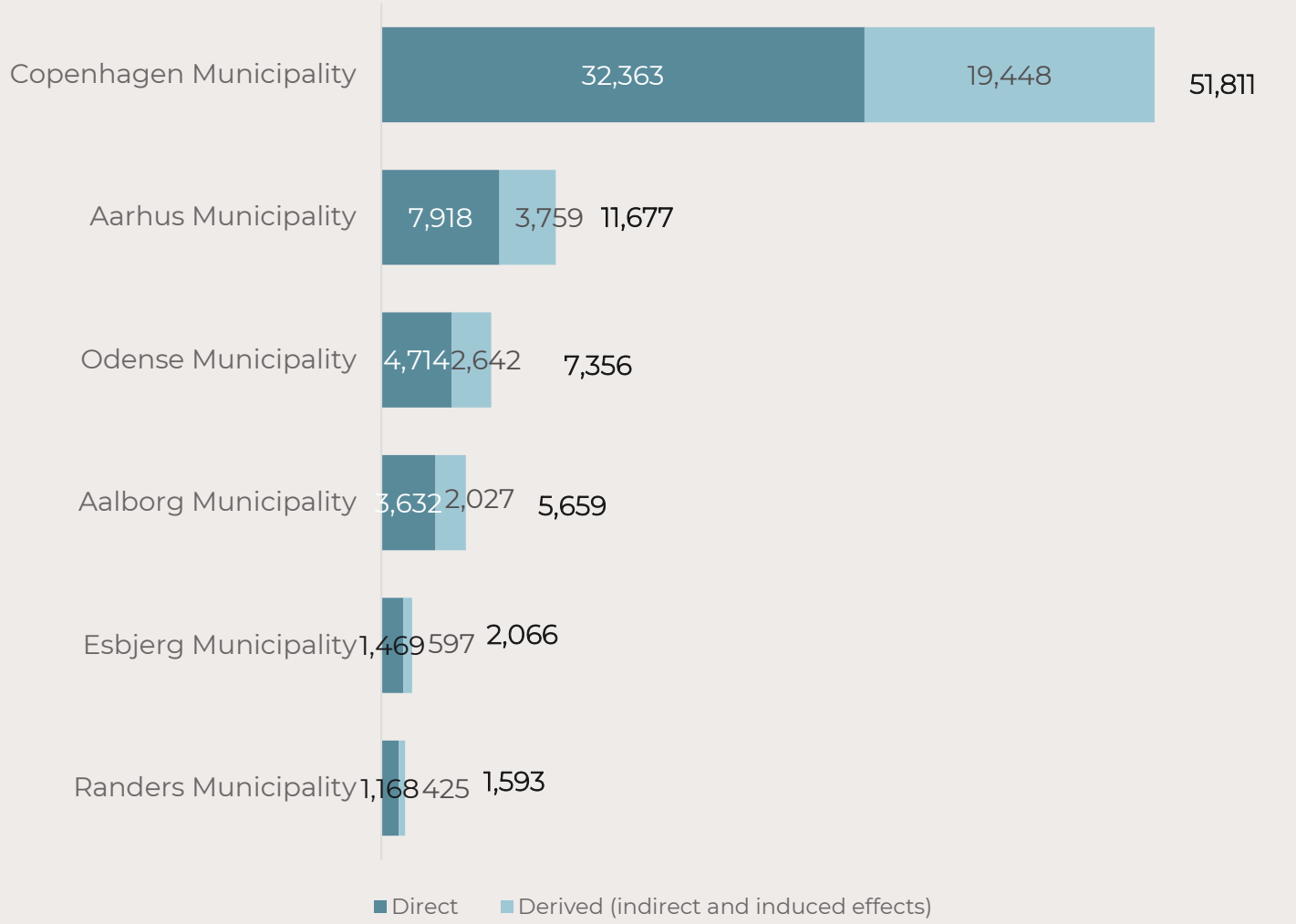
Source: SAM-K/LINE (CRT). Statistics Denmark, FOLK1A, 2022K1. Population figures are shown at the bottom of the columns.
Note: Value added follows the National Accounts' definition of gross value added at current prices. The figures in the figure are rounded to the nearest DKK.

OVER 80,000 PEOPLE EMPLOYED AS A RESULT OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

In total, cultural and leisure activities in the six municipalities contributed to the employment of 80,161 people throughout the country in 2022.

Of these, 51,264 people (64%) are employed through direct activities in the cultural and leisure sector in the municipalities, while 28,897 people (36%) are employed as part of the derived activity that arises in related industries that supply goods and services to the cultural and leisure industry (indirect and induced employment).

Total employment nationwide created in 2022 based on cultural and leisure activities in the municipalities in the 6-city collaboration, number of persons



Source: SAM-K/LINE (CRT). Note: Employment follows the definition in the national accounts and includes persons who provide labour for the production of goods and services in Denmark. The calculation includes the average number of persons employed in the period 2022.

A TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF OVER EUR 2.7 BILLION IN TAX REVENUE ACROSS MUNICIPALITIES

The figure shows the tax revenue generated across the six municipalities in the 6-city collaboration. The cultural and leisure industries in the six municipalities generate tax revenue across the country totalling EUR 2,713 million.

Of this, EUR 1.263 billion (47%) comes from the primary industries within the cultural and leisure sector in the municipalities, while EUR 1.450 billion (53%) is generated through activity and production in related industries.

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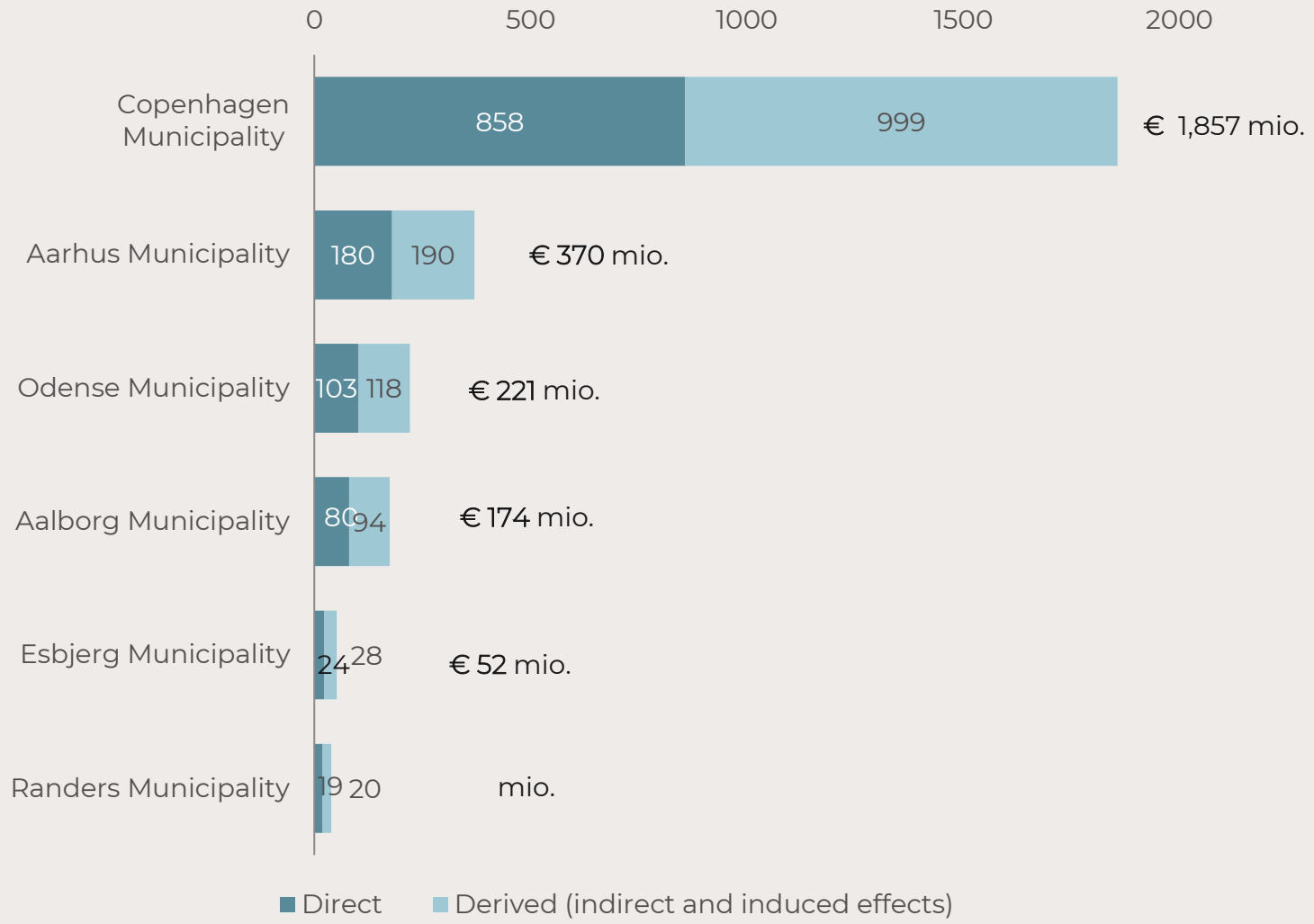
Total tax revenue generated nationwide in 2022 based on cultural and leisure activities in the municipalities in the 6-city collaboration, EUR million.



Source: SAM-K/LINE (CRT). Note: Tax revenue is the sum of personal income tax, corporate income tax, excise duties and VAT. Taxes are distributed according to the place of residence of the taxpayer. The figures in the figure are rounded to the nearest million EUR.

Socio-economic value

TAX REVENUE CALCULATED PER CAPITA

The figure shows the total tax revenue generated by cultural and leisure activities per capita in the six municipalities in the 6-city collaboration.

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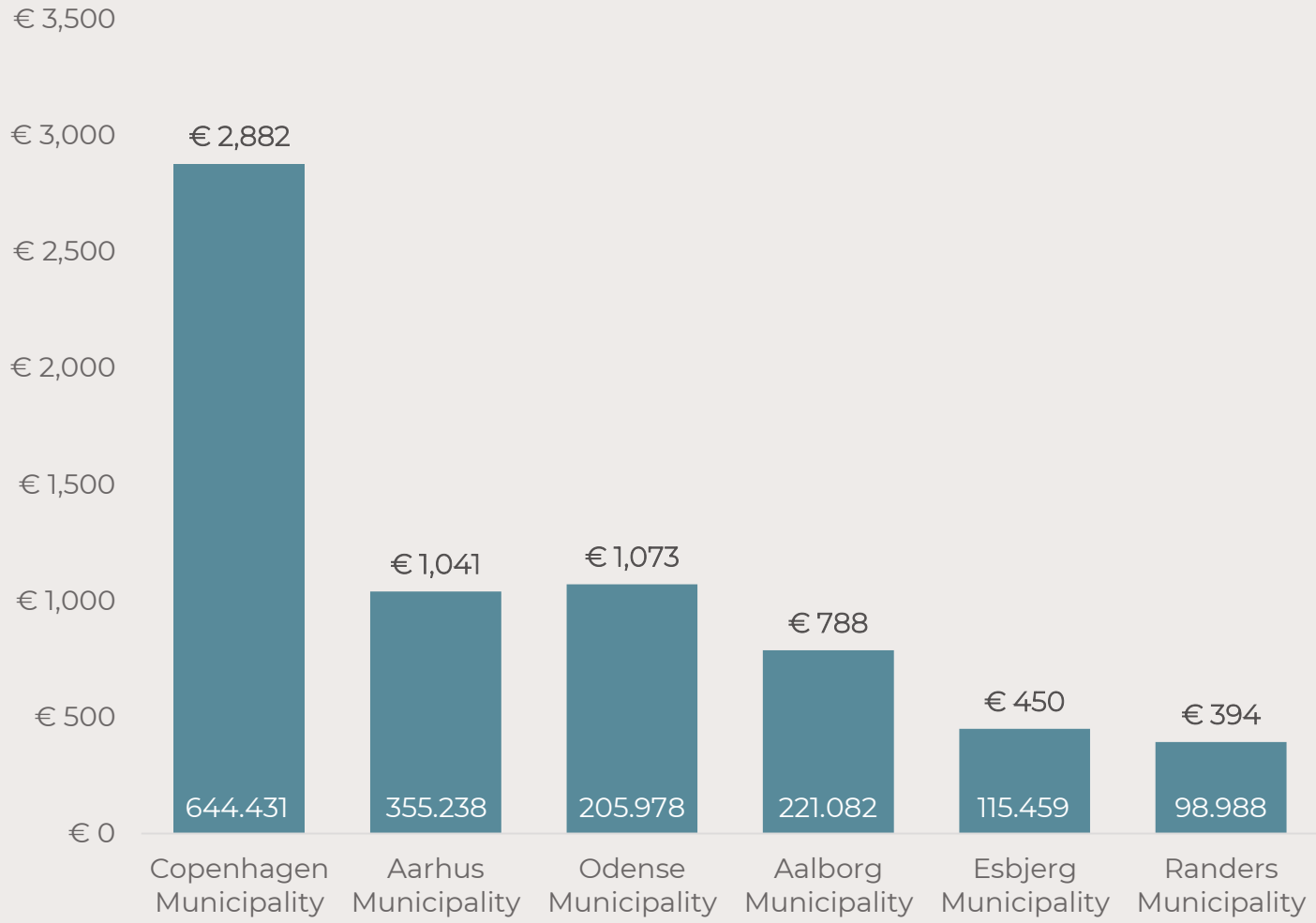
Tax revenue generated nationwide in 2022 based on cultural and leisure activities in the municipalities in the 6-city collaboration, EUR per capita



Source: SAM-K/LINE (CRT). Statistics Denmark, FOLK1A, 2022K1. Population figures are shown at the bottom of the columns.
Note: Tax revenue is the sum of personal taxes, corporate taxes, excise duties and VAT. Taxes are distributed according to the place of residence of the taxpayer. The figures in the figure are rounded to the nearest DKK.

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The economic contribution of cultural and leisure activities compared with national figures and figures from the tourism industry

Gross value added

The total value added in Denmark in 2022 is estimated at **approximately EUR 335 billion.** The cultural and leisure industries have contributed EUR 7.4 billion, corresponding to approximately 2% of the total value added.

By comparison, the value added of the tourism industry is estimated at EUR 10.5 billion in 2022.

Employment

In 2022, total employment was **3,167,885 people**, of which cultural and leisure activities across municipalities contributed approximately 80,000 people in employment (approx. 3%).

By comparison, tourism had a total employment effect of approximately 145,000 full-time equivalents in 2022. However, this refers to full-time equivalents and not the number of people employed.

Tax revenue

When comparing tax revenues between industries, tourism has generated approximately EUR 7.1 billion in tax revenues, while culture and leisure activities across municipalities have contributed approximately EUR 2.7 billion.

Denmark's total revenue from taxes and duties in 2022 was approximately **EUR 161.8 billion.**

Source: The total economic figures for Denmark and for tourism are taken from the report The Economic Impact of Tourism 2022 from VisitDenmark. https://www.visitdenmark.dk/sites/visitdenmark.com/files/2024-10/Turismens%20%C3%B8konomiske%20betydning%20i%20Danmark%202022%20-%20REV.pdf. Statistics Denmark SKAT total taxes and duties in 2022.

VALUE FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND CITIZENS

Photo: Jakob Vingtoft

HIGH LEVEL OF WELL-BEING AMONG CITIZENS ACROSS MUNICIPALITIES

The reports consistently show that the vast majority of citizens surveyed in the municipalities experience a high level of well-being and quality of life, with between 79% and 83% rating it as good or very good.

In the questionnaire surveys, citizens were also asked to what extent they believe that cultural and leisure activities influence their well-being and quality of life.

Between 30% and 47% of respondents across the municipalities stated that cultural and leisure activities have a *large* or *very large* influence on their well-being and quality of life.

Between 4% and 32% of citizens across municipalities believe that cultural and leisure activities have a *low* or *very low* influence on their well-being and quality of life.

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	Well-being and quality of life
Aarhus Municipality	83
Odense Municipality	83
Aalborg Municipality	81
Esbjerg Municipality	83
Randers Municipality	79

Note: The question is phrased: "How would you rate your well-being and quality of life overall? The figure shows the proportion of citizens who answered "Very good" or "Good".

Photo: Roar Paaske

CULTURAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO MUNICIPALITIES BEING PERCEIVED AS A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE

Across municipalities, a significant proportion of citizens mention that both cultural life and leisure and community life contribute to the municipality being a good place to live.

This is confirmed in the individual reports, where these areas often rank among the three most important reasons for the municipality's attractiveness. A third frequently mentioned factor is nature and green spaces.

The results thus indicate that cultural life and leisure activities are key elements that make cities more attractive and contribute to municipalities being perceived as a good place to live.

Proportion of citizens who state that cultural and leisure activities are a reason why the municipality is a good place to live

Note: The figures are based on open coding among respondents who rate the municipality as a good place to live to a high or very high degree. Respondents were able to give several reasons in their answers.

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TOP 3 CONSUMPTION OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES ACROSS MUNICIPALITIES

	1	2	3
Aarhus Municipality	Museums (68%)	Cinemas (68%)	Parks (64%)
Odense Municipality	Outdoor life, parks, memorials and cultural heritage (74%)	Cinemas (66%)	Museums (49%)
Aalborg Municipality	Outdoor life, parks, memorials and cultural heritage (64%)	Cinemas (63%)	Libraries (52%)
Esbjerg Municipality	Outdoor life, parks, memorials and cultural heritage (60%)	Cinemas (57%)	Music and entertainment venues (53%)
Randers Municipality	Outdoor life, parks, memorials and cultural heritage (62%)	Cinemas (61%)	Libraries and bookmobiles (48%)

Photo: Sarah Green

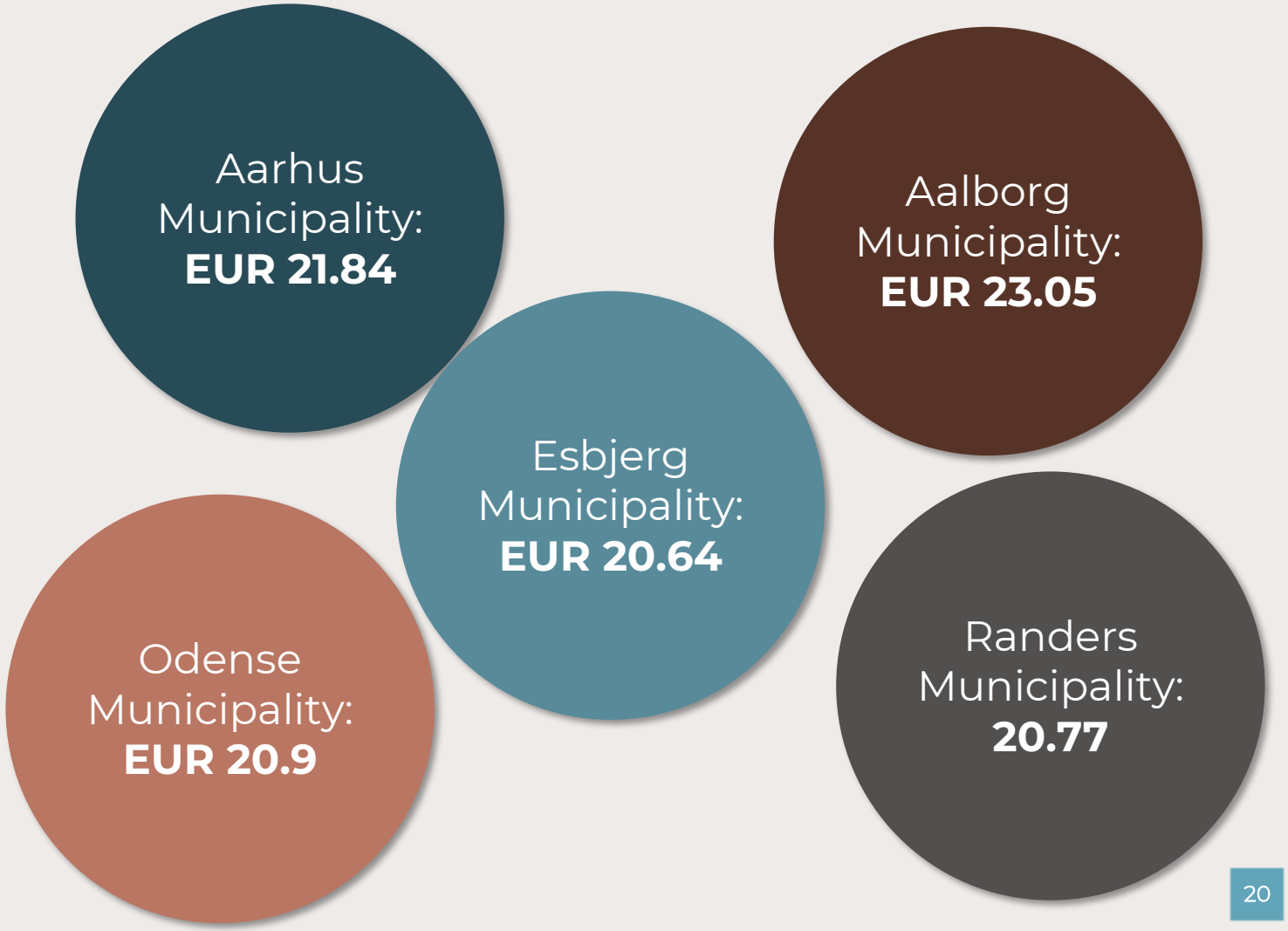
Note: The question was phrased as follows: "Which of the following cultural and leisure activities do you participate in?" The percentage is indicated in parentheses. Respondents were able to select multiple answers.

ACROSS MUNICIPALITIES, CITIZENS EXPERIENCE A PERCEIVED VALUE IN CULTURE AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO PAY FOR.

In addition to the socio-economic contribution, citizens experience a personal perceived value of culture and leisure across municipalities.

This has been measured through questionnaire surveys in which citizens have been able to indicate whether they are willing to pay more in taxes to preserve cultural and leisure activities. The method is explained in detail in the individual reports.

The average perceived utility value for citizens varies between EUR 20.77 and EUR 23.05 per month across the municipalities in the 6-city collaboration.



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