

CHAMBER OF ARCHITECTS IN BULGARIA
SOFIA-CITY REGIONAL BOARD

GUILD OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

11 Krakra Street, Sofia 1504 , email: kabsofia.la@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern,

The Guild of Landscape Architects at the Sofia-City Regional board of the Chamber of Architects in Bulgaria (CAB) confirms its partnership with The Collective Foundation, chaired by Martin Yankov, and its support for the initiative "The Rivers of Sofia".

The Chamber of Architects in Bulgaria is the professional association of practitioners in the fields of architecture, urbanism, and landscape architecture. The Guild of Landscape Architects unites over 290 members, striving to protect their professional interests in accordance with the interests of society.

As a leading authority and with expertise in urban landscape planning and design, we recommend The Rivers of Sofia as a good practice example of urban development that activates historical sites, urban landscape and natural resources, engages citizens, sparks dialogue with the responsible institutions, and presents an overall innovative approach to architectural and natural heritage.

The Rivers of Sofia identified components of the urban environment which had not been utilised at all: the stone banks, riverbeds, and retaining walls that channel the two rivers crossing Sofia's centre. Despite these structures' relatively good condition, they are not recognised by the public as a valuable part of the city. By means of light architectural interventions and a strategy to socialise these spaces, the project unlocks the rivers' potential and reactivates forgotten heritage. The Rivers of Sofia provides access to the riverbanks for tens of thousands of people. Temporary structures allow them to see these locations in a new light, while at the same time the existing structure and materials are preserved. The publicity campaign, together with a varied cultural programme, attracts a wide audience that is learning more about the city's history and the role of early 20th century hydraulic engineering for its current development.

The Rivers of Sofia is valuable also because it not only forms a new urban culture, but also sparks collaboration with local and national government institutions. It fosters dialogue among citizens, officials, and the private sector. This long-term project exemplifies the way of how undervalued public spaces can be mobilised to engage the public, to increase awareness of the city's history, and to improve the urban environment and quality of life. In 2021, The Rivers of Sofia grew into The Rivers of the City -- a wider initiative that unites projects using the same effective model for revitalization of cultural heritage and urban landscapes in different locations. We support the initiative and, as its partner, we are hopeful about its future success.

SINCERELY,

land.arch. Desislav Evlogiev

Chairperson of the Guild of Landscape Architects
at the Sofia-City Regional board of CAB

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Letter of recommendation

This letter of recommendation serves as a proof for the partnership between **Sofia GREEN** and **The Collective Foundation**.

The goal of *Sofia GREEN* is to support citizen-led initiatives targeting the expansion of the green system of the city, improving air quality, sustainable mobility and city development and transformation.

The Collective foundation is a young organisation dealing with the revival of urban spaces by hosting strategic events and temporary placemaking which demonstrates the green future of our city.


Since its formation in 2020, the Collective has shown dynamic and progressive growth. Their main initiative - “Rivers of Sofia” creates temporary accessible green areas at the usually inaccessible urban rivers, which serve as storm reservoirs, passing through the centre of Sofia. The project strategically engages the general public and the institutions in a permanent activation of these sites. The festival “Rivers of Sofia” brought the attention and the support of Sofia Municipality and initiated a discussion, focussed at transforming Perlovska and Vladayska rivers into accessible linear parks for pedestrians and cyclists. The initiative was also a key factor for Sofia’s candidacy for the European Green Capital 2023.

For the first time the project opened access to the rivers, through temporary staircases and gave the opportunity to build a relationship between the city and the rivers. This gave a different perspective so that the people could experience the city from a different perspective by going down to the riverbank and admiring the valuable natural and architectural heritage. That way, thousands of citizens are now directly engaged with this meaningful cause.

As an organisation dealing with green and sustainable city development, the team of SOfia GREEN acknowledges the “Rivers of Sofia” initiative as a meaningful and sustainable project which the city of Sofia would like to further support and develop. It is an example of how a complex urban challenge could be dealt with by unifying our efforts, starting from a small and energetic civil initiative.

It is our pleasure to recommend “Rivers of Sofia” for any funding and support consideration. The Collective Foundation is a reliable partner and an important player in citizen-led initiatives in Sofia and we are more than happy to support their application.

Yours sincerely,



Elitsa Panayotova
Coordinator of SOfia GREEN
Sofia Development Association

Date: 20.01.2022

Reference letter

By Irina Altanova,

CEO MOVE.BG Foundation

In support of The Collective Foundation and their initiative “The Rivers of Sofia”

With the present letter, MOVE.BG Foundation expresses its full support for the initiative The Rivers of Sofia and for The Collective Foundation. As a network which unites innovators, artists, and entrepreneurs striving for change, we believe that The Collective is an outstanding organisation which is contributing to a greener, more sustainable future in Bulgaria.

The Collective Foundation showcases the importance of working together and building community around shared values. Through a series of events and tactical interventions, the Rivers of Sofia project unites the energy of citizens, institutions, cultural organisations, and the private sector. This collaborative, holistic approach catalyses a process of quicker and more sustainable urban transformation.

The Rivers of Sofia clearly demonstrates how the unpopular, unused urban channels in Bulgaria’s capital present an opportunity to create green, active public spaces as a valuable resource for the whole city. The project utilises an innovative urbanistic approach: a series of festivals with a varied programme, which engage citizens, raise the awareness of local government and the media, and forge lasting partnerships around a longer-term strategy for urban transformation. The Collective uses these regular, strategic events to sustain and cultivate societal and government interest towards these forgotten, key public spaces.

The Rivers of Sofia is a project which fulfils the need for concerted effort to achieve green transformation and heritage activation in Bulgarian cities. As a partner of The Collective Foundation, we can say that the organisation is achieving its goals effectively and is making an increasing impact. The Collective’s team is dedicated to the preservation of the rivers’ architectural and natural heritage. We believe that all their projects will not only preserve this heritage, but will also add great value to it.

Yours faithfully,

Irina Altanova,
Chief Executive Officer,
MOVE.BG Foundation

