



european cultural foundation

We support arts and culture across wider Europe, by investing in creativity and boundary-crossing innovation.

How to apply for an ECF Balkan Incentive Fund for Culture grant

Introduction

Eligibility Criteria

What we don't fund

How we assess the applications

Application Form

Introduction

Grants are at the core of our work. The connecting power of culture is essential for creating open, inclusive and democratic societies: for 'building Europe'. We are looking for projects that have the potential to inspire people to transcend boundaries in this process.

Our grants programme stimulates transnational cultural collaboration, artistic expression and the mobility of artists and cultural actors. Our various grants schemes relate to different ECF focus areas and to specific regions of the European continent.

All of our activities revolve around the three strategic guiding principles outlined below. Applications that tie in with these principles will receive a higher score in the assessment procedure.

Our guiding principles

1. Empowerment of People through Art and Culture – we want to support different communities in Europe and encourage the exchange and empowerment of under-represented groups.

We are interested in:

- **diversity within our societies:** projects that reduce exclusion and conflict by bringing people together; projects that target new audiences and create new places for showcasing culture.

2. Connecting Sources of Knowledge – we think sharing and connecting knowledge is vital in creating an open Europe.

We are interested in:

- **cross-sectoral and cross-generational online and offline collaborations:** projects that try out innovative and creative partnerships to develop/produce new work, broaden knowledge-sharing and public participation, as well as experiment with new technologies.

3. Linking Policy and Practice – we are interested in projects that help build this open Europe by contributing to cultural policy development locally, nationally, regionally and at European level.

We are interested in:

- **Impacting on European cultural policy:** projects that actively contribute to policy and practice; that connect a local perspective to the European level; also projects that bring cultural and political players together in new ways, and that raise awareness and help prove the value of cultural policy.

Eligibility Criteria

The Balkan Incentive Fund for Culture supports artistic and cultural work within the Western Balkans, created either by organisations in the region or in collaboration with the region. The focus of the grant is to strengthen relations across the Western Balkans (namely Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) and Europe, in order to stimulate the European Union integration process. All applications need to be in line with all the eligibility criteria. Please read them carefully as proposals which do not meet these criteria will not be considered.

1. Who is eligible?

- **Lead applicant:** independent artistic or cultural organisation based in the Western Balkans; independent artistic or cultural organisation based in other parts of Europe in collaboration with an independent organisation in the Balkan region.
- **Partnering applicant:** same as above.

Please note: organisations may participate once as a main applicant and once as a partner organisation for the same grants round. This means that one applicant may be involved in two different projects for the same funding round. Project applications involving organisations partnering in more than two projects, in the same grants round, will be excluded.

2. What is eligible?

There are six different eligibility criteria. All of them are equally important to us, hence applications must to be in line with all eligibility criteria. Please read them carefully. Proposals which do not meet these criteria will not be considered.

Partnership working methodology

- The applicant/s must be an independent cultural and/or artistic organisation from the **Western Balkans**. The project may also be organised by a cultural organisation in Europe (following the 47 countries of the [Council of Europe](#)) in partnership with an independent cultural organisation from the Western Balkan region. In line, with our interest to foster cooperation also with the southern European region, we also welcome projects partnering with Mediterranean countries (which are: Algeria; Egypt; Jordan; Lebanon; Morocco; Palestine; Syria and Tunisia) if the content of the project links centrally to cross border cooperation with/in the Western Balkans. This is a basic criteria for all projects.
- Transnational collaboration within the Western Balkans is the key phrase for this grants scheme. Projects are selected first and foremost both on the specific geographical scope and the collaborative aspect. We therefore need to see the collaboration reflected in your entire application form. This means that project partners must be involved in all aspects of the project; working together on the planning, the development and the realisation. This also implies all partners should contribute financially to the project (note that we also consider in-kind contribution as financial support).

Cultural focus

- The project should have a strong cultural objective and a concrete end product. In this sense, we support a variety of activities: the creation of artistic work, media projects or cultural policy development including capacity building of cultural actors..

European dimension

The project must be carried out by, or with, an independent cultural or artistic organisation from the Western Balkans, and the project must have European dimension.

Sustainability

- The project must have a clear end-result that can be evaluated.
- Ideally, the project is a starting point for sustainable cooperation between the partners.

Timeframe

- The project activities should only start after ECF's funding decision has been made (please check the exact planning for this grant scheme on the [ECF grants](#) website section)
- The project must be completed 18 months after the contract has been signed.

Financial

- ECF can support up to 80% (max) of the total budget. We encourage applicant organisations and their partners to demonstrate their own contributions and to apply to other funders. This should be demonstrated in the budget outline.
- ECF provides an average collaboration grant of Euro 15,000. The maximum grant awarded is Euro 30,000.
- ECF specifically welcomes involvement of local funding partners, as we believe this contributes to embedding the project in the local context.

- ECF may select your project even if your remaining budget is not secured when applying. Payment of the ECF grant will be conditional on an agreed percentage of other funding having been secured at least one month before the start date of your project.

What we don't fund

We don't fund the activities listed below. Please read them carefully. No exceptions will be made. If your project is not eligible, we recommend you to look at [LabforCulture](#) for other funding sources.

Investment of grant

- Operating costs of an organisation's regular activities
- Touring/exhibition of an existing work
- Production costs of a one-off performance or art work
- Awards, competitions and residencies
- Independent literary works, translations or running costs of an ongoing series of publications or cultural reviews (publications documenting your collaborative project however may be included in your application)
- Projects that rely entirely on ECF funding

Nature of collaboration

- Organisations without committed partners
- Bilateral or local projects lacking a European dimension
- Projects in which the main applicant consists of: student bodies, commercial organisations, state institutions, amateur organisations, or organisations focusing primarily on education, religion or heritage.
- Independent cultural and artistic organisations applying more than once as main applicant and/or more than once as project partner in a grant round

Focus of the project

- Activities that focus only on the academic sector or represent traditional approaches to research and education (e.g. school/university exchanges, scholarships, research or education programmes firmly located within a traditional institution)
- Institutional approaches to arts education or art therapy
- Folkloric events and projects which focus on conserving European heritage
- Initiatives based solely on tourism

How we assess the applications

After you have submitted your application, the eligible applications are first evaluated by the grants team. The pre-selection is distributed among a group of external advisors, from the Balkan region and with different fields of expertise. Each proposal is assessed by two different advisors. After this assessment, ECF makes a decision on which projects are selected, and what will be the amount of the grant. Both awarded and rejected applicants are notified by e-mail within three months after submitting their proposal. Decisions are final.

Want to apply? Go to the [grant application form](#).