

BALKAN INCENTIVE FUND FOR CULTURE

The Balkan Incentive Fund for Culture supports projects that promote cultural cooperation projects by organisations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo/a, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. We fund projects that promote European and regional cultural cooperation and exchange - projects by small and medium-sized independent cultural organisations that work on cross-border and inter-regional projects.

This printable version contains:

- **GUIDELINES FOR BIFC GRANT APPLICATION**
- **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**
- **SOME TIPS WHEN FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION FORM**
- **EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS ECF SUPPORTED IN THE PAST**

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GUIDELINES

What is eligible?

Cultural

- The project should have a strong cultural objective.

Cooperation

- The project should be concerned with cross border cooperation. In exceptional cases we also support regional cooperation that does not transgress the national level, when the Balkan Incentive Fund for Culture considers it to be essential to achieve future cross border cooperation.
- All project partners must be involved in the execution of the project.

Balkan

- The project has to be organised by a cultural organisation in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro or Kosovo/a. In exceptional cases organisations from other European countries can also be supported, when the project would greatly benefit cultural development in the above mentioned countries.

Outcome

- The project must have a clear end-result that can be evaluated.

If your project does not answer to all of these eligibility criteria, it is highly unlikely that it will be supported

What do we like, what are we interested in?

Below you find examples of the qualities that might convince us to support your project. Please note however that there is no magic recipe or perfect approach for getting your application awarded. Our Grants process is highly competitive, on average only 1 in 8 applications is supported.

We are interested in:

- projects that express the diversity within Western Balkan societies and within Europe;
- projects that improve cultural collaboration within (South Eastern) Europe and its immediate neighbourhood;
- projects that reach beyond the national level, particularly those which forge new connections between countries or regions that would not usually collaborate;
- projects that approach European developments in an artistic way;
- projects that are original, and give a new perspective on certain concepts or fields of expertise;
- projects that have a legacy for the future, and can become substantial as well as sustainable, for example through structural cooperation on an organisational level;
- project which bring culture of high quality to places that are usually not part of the international cultural discourse;
- projects that attract new audiences to the arts;
- projects that are participatory;
- projects that have a concrete end-product.

What is not eligible?

- Projects by **individuals**, including those seeking scholarship, bursary or residency costs. The ECF has two mobility funds which support individual professionals in the cultural sector: STEP beyond and the Roberto Cimetta Fund.
- projects organised by **student bodies, commercial organisations, state institutions, amateur organisations**, or organisations focusing primarily on **education, religion or heritage**
- 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)
- **folkloric events** and projects which focus on conserving European **heritage**
- initiatives based solely on **tourism**
- conventional approaches to **arts education or art therapy**
- **awards**, competitions
- **individual literary works**, translations or running costs of an ongoing series of publications or cultural reviews (however, publications documenting your collaborative project may be included in your budget)
- touring of an **existing work**
- operating costs of an **organisation's regular activities**
- production costs of a **one-off performance** or art work
- bilateral or local projects **lacking a European dimension**
- **projects that rely entirely on funding from our organisation**
- organisations wishing to realise a **project without strong partners**

The application

Please note:

- All grants applicants are required to create a profile page on rhiz.eu; all projects that are awarded a grant will also be requested to present the granted project on rhiz.
- BIFC grants up to a maximum of Euro 30,000. The average project grant is Euro 10,000 - 15,000
- The BIFC does not support more than 80% of the project's total budget. Since the application process is highly competitive, you will maximize your chances of being awarded a grant by presenting a project which will be supported by a balanced and mixed range of funders.
- Projects that will take place before the grants assessments have been finalized will not be awarded. Assessment decisions will usually be finalized within 8 - 10 weeks of the deadlines advertised on the website
- We do not normally support the same organisations more than once in a period of 18 months. However, if your second project reflects significant developments in its form or content and represents an essential follow-up to work already realised, you should contact the grants department for guidance. Please note that we never support recurring projects if content, form and project funders remain largely unchanged
- We recommend that all applications should include clear arguments explaining why the BIFC should support your project
- Incomplete applications will not be considered
- Applications will not be accepted after the deadlines advertised on our website.

Some Frequently Asked Questions

What does the BIFC mean by ‘cultural’?

A cultural project can be a variety of things: we support the creation of artistic work, media projects or cultural policy development as well as capacity building of cultural operators or international collaboration of arts managers, et cetera. We like to see projects that are involving people with different backgrounds (ethnic, religious, national or otherwise), but they should also relate strongly to artistic/cultural expression (theatre, visual arts, literature, et cetera).

What does the BIFC mean by ‘cooperation’?

Collaboration/Cooperation for us should be something that goes beyond merely the hosting of foreign work, a project partner’s attendance at an event, or a financial contribution to the project. We are looking for projects which involve different cultural organisations working together in the planning, development and realization of the project. The collaboration aspect is one of the most important factors on which projects are being selected.

Are there any forms of cooperation which the BIFC is not likely to support?

We do not usually support bilateral projects based primarily on well-established patterns of collaboration. National institutions are frequently active in this field.

BIFC does not support the operating costs or regular activities of cultural organisations, but only specific actions that can be considered a project.

Events that are focused only on the presentation of culture are not very likely to be supported.

See also our list of project categories that are not eligible for support.

What does the BIFC mean by ‘Balkan’?

The Balkan Incentive Fund for Culture is specifically aimed at cultural cooperation projects by organisations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo/a, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Of course cooperation with organisations outside these countries will not be excluded. As the BIFC aims to improve the cultural infrastructure in the Balkan region specifically, we think this will be accomplished in the best way when non-Balkan partners are included as partners, and one of the Balkan organisations will be the main applicant. In exceptional cases organisations from other European countries can also be supported, when the project would greatly benefit cultural development in the above mentioned countries.

Can local or regional projects with no official partners be eligible if the projects are relevant to the BIFC’s interests?

No – this would only occur if the local funding situation was so extreme that it prohibited any development in the cultural sector. Even in such cases, priority would be given to projects that reflect at least some kind of cooperation with organisations or individuals from neighbouring regions.

How many different countries should be represented in each project?

There is no specific requirement regarding the number of countries that should be represented. What we like to see is evidence of genuine cross-border collaboration in all stages of the project – planning, development and implementation. We are not interested in superficial consortia built for fundraising purposes.

Regional and smaller-scale projects are as welcome as pan-European collaborations. However, we will not usually award grants to local or bilateral projects that could be supported through national or regional funds.

Can an applicant apply more than once per deadline?

Applicants can only apply once as leading applicant and once as partner organisation in another project. This means that one applicant may be involved in two different projects per deadline.

If BIFC has supported a project of my organisation already, can I apply for another one?

Usually we do not support the same organisations more than once in a period of 18 months. Before you apply with a new project, make sure the previous one has been finalised administratively by the Grants department (meaning that the final reports have been processed).

Are pan-European collaborations of interest to the BIFC?

Definitely, as long as they are developed through a bottom-up approach and are based on genuine, mutually beneficial partnerships. But for projects with a scope reaching far beyond the Balkan region it would probably be more appropriate to apply for the ECF Grants Programme.

Do we give priority to any particular discipline or art form?

No, as long as the project fits in with our eligibility criteria and corresponds to all requirements listed in the Grants Guidelines, we are open to most disciplines and art forms. However, we are particularly interested in cross-disciplinary projects and the breaking down of traditional or specialist 'ghettos'. Please look at our website gallery and lists of projects supported for examples of grants awarded in recent years.

What is this rhiz.eu website and how this it relate to BIFC?

Rhiz.eu is an intercultural meeting place developed to give its members an easy and fun environment for communicating and collaborating with each other. It was created by the ECF, one of the founders of the BIFC. Rhiz.eu is a trans-European project that aims to be an interesting artistic project in itself while acting as a bridge between communities. We expect to gather loads of profiles, stories, project info – and to have vivid discussions.

Some tips when filling out the application form

General

The form we use is meant for a wide variety of projects, which means that not all questions are equally relevant for all categories. For example, not all projects can expect to have a big political impact, and the distinction between target group and audience is not always applicable. But please take every question seriously, and think about how it relates to the project you are proposing.

Partners

Like we mentioned in the FAQ, partnership for BIFC is about genuine cooperation in the execution of the project. Please only mention partners that are involved in the execution; cofinancers can be mentioned in the budget section. If you have more than three partners, please mention the three most important ones in section 1.e, the other ones can be brought up in section 6.b.

Summary

Use this space to explain clearly what you will actually be doing, and don't only express the good intentions you have. It may sound silly, but we actually see a lot of application forms where people forget to mention what the actions of the project really consist of, losing themselves in descriptions of goals, intentions and other more or less abstract notions. There is plenty of opportunity for this in other sections of the application form.

Expertise

We like to see who the key people of the execution of the project are, and why they are suited for the job (experience, training, expertise). Just mentioning that the people involved in the project are good is not sufficient: we like to understand why you think so.

Budget

1. Expenditure

- Make sure that you show what you based the figures mentioned on. For example, if you mention travel costs, show how the estimated cost relates to the expected number of people travelling and the expected cost per person.
- Of course the costs mentioned have to relate to the activities you are going to undertake. Just using the categories of costs we mention in the form with some abstract numbers is not sufficient, we really want to gain insight in how you plan to spend the money.
- We want to see the expenditure for the entire project, not only the amount you would like BIFC to contribute.
- If the complexity of the project can not be expressed in the simple budget format we use in the form, please fill in a simplified version of the expenditure in the application form following our format and contact the grants administrator how to transfer the detailed budgetary information.

2. Income

- Make sure the total amount of funding you expect equals the total expenditure you have mentioned.
- Indicate clearly for each funding source whether it has been secured already (the funder has agreed to contribute) or whether it is requested only (the decision on the funding request is not yet taken).
- We think it is very important that each project shows a certain level of local commitment (be it financial or in-kind support), and is not solely dependent on international sources.

EXAMPLES OF THE DIVERSITY OF PROJECTS THAT ECF HAS SUPPORTED IN THE PAST:

Please note: the categories mentioned are only indications of the variety of projects, they are not significant for the assessment.

Diversity

- *The Parade Europe brings together civic parades from all over Europe in a big Parade in Barcelona. The project enables civic parades from “new” EU-countries to take part in this parade. ECF supported the Technical Day, where issues concerning cultural and social cohesion will be discussed, the network of civil parades will be further developed and events for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue will be prepared.*
- *The Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art organised “Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: a Postcolonial Exhibition Project in 5 Acts”. This multidisciplinary exhibition project in Iceland, Greenland, Faroe Islands and Finland reconsiders the colonial past of the Nordic countries in order to identify the historical source of some of the inequalities, and intolerances, which structure the Nordic societies today.*

European identity

- *The Latvian Centre for Art Management and Information established a contemporary art project concerning a new attribute of identification to the European Union: a national costume for all European citizens. The costume was presented to and discussed with the European public during a bus trip addressing 21 member states. To test the possibility for a small cultural institution to initiate a political decision a draft law on the design and patterns will be submitted to the European Union.*
- *Based on a recently recovered statue in Ukraine originating from the Austrian-Hungarian empire (the so-called Czernowitz Austria), ten visual artists from central and eastern Europe will investigate the role and power of old and new European cultural icons. This will result in exhibitions in Austria, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Ukraine, and will be documented in two books and a dvd. The resulting artworks will be donated to Ukraine.*

Art for social change

- *D Media Association in Romania started a collaborative video project involving participants from Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Germany, which will produce videos on the topics: significance of borders, the transformation of labour and markets and the challenging role of civil society. The videos will be shown in 20 cities across Europe and beyond to open up a critical dialogue on the global market, corporate privatisation and the demands for more precarious work.*
- *Az Theatre (UK) organised theatre workshops, based on Euripides’ play Alcestis, in Algeria, Italy, UK, Kosovo and Palestine, dealing with recovery and survival from war and violence. The workshops will include children as well as people from the local therapeutic community.*

Policy development

- *YUSTAT Centre brings together representatives of various cultural institutions through advocating, lobbying and a forum. The aim of the project is to promote culture as a significant aspect of sustainable development of a strong society and to stimulate cross-sector cooperation in contemporary artistic productions.*
- *The Kosovan organisation Stacion CCA organised a platform for politically engaged artists, intellectuals and culture producers from Europe which includes an international workshop and conference on “Cultural Policies as Crisis Management”. The project aims to establish stronger artistic and cultural initiatives as an additional process to the political negotiations for the future status of Kosovo.*

Art production

- *Robovox is a sound installation for large public spaces in the form of an 8.2m high robot. Erected in crowded city squares, it will receive text messages from anyone and*

transmit them verbally for passers-by to hear. RoboVox will be installed in Slovenia, Serbia, UK and The Netherlands to investigate the differences and similarities of the participation of general EU passers-by in the creative multimedia installations and its influence on the same audience.

- *The project BorderXing (pronounced as “border crossing”) will develop an online-game that will address migration and integration. Players will be able to experience border situations at two major migration routes to Europe (from Africa and the Far East), playing the role of either refugee/migrant or authorities. The game will be accompanied by a website with comprehensive information on migration, interviews with migrants and experts, and interactive possibilities like news feeds, forums and web chats.*

Bridges between unexpected partners

- *The project Liminal Spaces by The Israeli Center for Digital Art consists of workshops, performances, screenings, exhibitions and lectures involving 16 Palestinian and Israeli artists and participating European artists. The project focuses on site-specific artistic projects in Jerusalem and Ramallah, in order to create a work platform for artists and the creative community in the region and to create conditions for future collaborations between Palestinian, Israeli and European artists.*
- *French organisation Nisi Masa organised a documentary filmmaking workshop and training in Mitrovica (Kosovo), given by professional European filmmakers, for 25 young adults coming from Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. The results will be a series of short documentary films about Mitrovica’s youth.*

cultural solutions to political /social issues

- *A group of 10 photographers from Central and Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Georgia, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine) has produced a photo essay on illegal workers in the new EU countries. The result will be presented in a travelling exhibition and will be published in newspapers and magazines across Europe.*
- *UK-based organisation Northern Arts Tactical Offensive initiated a multimedia event to investigate the nature of fundamentalism as an international phenomenon across the religious and political spectrum. The event, which will be held in Manchester, Edinburgh, Madrid and Berlin, consists of a visual arts exhibition, film screenings, presentations and discussions.*

Capacity building

- *In order to increase collaboration in the field of literature in the Balkans, share experience and knowledge, and improve the interaction between literature and its audience, Croatian organisation Kulturtreger organised a conference on book-related affairs for cultural managers, artists and publishers. The project will result in a survey of current literary works in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.*
- *To improve the quality of cultural management in Ukraine, the Centre for Applied Cultural Management will organise a Training of the trainers workshop in Odessa for cultural managers. The training will also be “published” on a DVD for further dissemination.*

Pan european collaboration

- *The research project The Migrant Body will explore the mechanism of temporary migration as artists are experiencing alternative cultures and new ways of working in different countries. Dancers, choreographers, writers and visual artists from the UK, Romania, Netherlands, Estonia and Italy will present the resulting work in UK, Romania, Estonia and the Netherlands.*
- *Hands-On!Europe is a European conference in Berlin with the aim to rethink and update the position of European children’s museums in the 21st century due to rapid societal changes taking place in the region. The three main themes are: Experiencing and managing cultural diversity, educational policy and museological approaches.*