



‘STEP *beyond*’ Mobility Fund

Guidelines

Launched in February 2003, our mobility scheme supports cross-border movement of artists and cultural workers to experience diversity and cross-cultural cooperation between all European countries, including those that are not currently members of the European Union, and since July 2005, in collaboration with the Arts and Culture Network Program of the Open Society Institute Budapest, also the countries of the South Caucasus, i.e. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, since January 2007 Turkey as well. It gives creative and inspiring channels for expression through a multifaceted exchange of ideas and communication with other cultures. Specifically, STEP beyond offers grants to people (individuals or those representing an organization) whose travel would contribute to this goal.

Through travel, the STEP beyond fund supports grantees to explore and reassess their own interests, gain inspiration, and stimulate innovative creative connections. The experience and insight gained through STEP-funded travel helps careers develop and sets individuals further along the road to success.

Mobility stands for the ability to move freely and easily cross borders to gain inspiration and stimulate innovative creative connections. Cross-border travel allows creative and inspiring modes of expression through collaboration and communication with other cultures. It is the life-blood of cultural cooperation. Artists and others in the cultural sector need to meet their international peers, exchange views, cooperate, influence and learn from each other.

Why this type of fund now?

In 2004 the European Union gained ten new members. With the eastward enlargement in 2007, the EU will acquire further new borders and therefore new neighbouring states. Countries and cultures that were previously felt to be ‘far away’ are more present in the lives of current and future EU citizens, as well as in the lives of the ‘new neighbours’.

The ECF wishes to strengthen cultural ties between those European countries that are not currently members of the EU and the present European Union countries. Supporting individual mobility in the setting-up phase of cultural and artistic initiatives is one means of strengthening such ties.

What kind of initiatives does the European Cultural Foundation support?

The ECF mobility fund, STEP *beyond* (Supporting Travel for European Projects) encourages travel that is guided by the following principles:

1. Travels with a distinct relation to the ECF's focus on **Diversity in Europe**.

These travels must also:

- a. Stimulate travel between the countries of the enlarged European Union and non-EU European countries.
- b. Support individuals in the DEVELOPMENTAL phase of new cross-border projects in the field of culture and the arts.
- c. Allow the individuals and cultural partners involved to initiate real cooperation and possibly enter a long-term PARTNERSHIP.
- d. Give preference to exploration eastwards in order to emphasize that Europe continues beyond the eastern borders of the European Union.

Thus ECF has created a targeted call for proposals related to its focus on **Experiencing diversity and the Power of Culture**.

Some possible topics which we propose are:

1. *European realities of religion – an alternative representation*
2. *Artistic youth in minority cultures*
3. *Migration and experimental art*
4. *European identity - transcending mental borders*
5. *Exploring trans-national identities*
6. *Visions of European decadence*

Projects with related themes on diversity should support and contribute to the diversity products of STEP beyond. It is not to have applicants define their projects, but rather to find these aspects of diversity within their existing work, and to emphasize them and bring them to the surface, accordingly.

ECF will therefore give priority to travels which are related to these topics, but will indeed continue to also support other projects related to Intercultural Dialogue.

Our mobility fund STEP beyond stimulates and supports cross-cultural creative projects. We want to motivate young artists and cultural practitioners to explore, experience, gain inspiration and influence others within their own networks to create new innovative creative connections through:

- Exploring unknown grounds and discovering different ways of working
- Collaborating and exchanging views and ideas
- Networking

Who can apply?

- Artists
- Cultural operators/activists
- Cultural journalists
- Cultural translators
- Cultural researchers

STEPbeyond** will not contribute towards the costs of:**

- Participation in festivals, conferences, summer schools or training sessions
- The showcasing of work or the staging of productions (concerts, exhibitions, etc)
- Student or University exchanges
- Government officials

What costs are covered?

The STEP *beyond* fund will make a contribution to travel costs, visa costs, and, in certain cases, accommodation costs (through an allowance) of those awarded a grant. It is an asset if the host organization could support the accommodation costs.

What countries can you travel to and from?

In order to facilitate the functioning of the fund as well as to reach its aims, we have divided the larger pan-European area into different areas. We work with the following groups of countries.

Group A (The countries that are not currently members of the EU including Bulgaria and Romania): Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and the countries of the South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Group B (The countries that joined the EU in 2004): Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

Group C (The countries within the EU before 2004 – including: Iceland, Norway and Switzerland): Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

For mobility in the Mediterranean region, the ECF gives its support to the Roberto Cimetta Fund. For information please go to www.cimettafund.org

The STEP beyond Fund will consider applications that encourage initiatives which correspond with one of the following types of travel:

A) Preparatory visit on invitation of a cultural non-governmental organization (NGO): COOPERATION and COLLABORATION TRAVEL

The travel should be based on an invitation of a cultural NGO (non-governmental organisation), in order to prepare a collaborative cultural or artistic project that would entail a degree of explorative travel as well. Exploration would apply to specific parts of the cultural sector relevant to the applicant's professional

development and/or lead to the sharing of their acquired knowledge upon returning. The applicant must be able to provide a letter from the NGO confirming the invitation.

Travel criteria for COOPERATION TRAVELS:

FROM:	TO:	Group A	Group B	Group C
Group A		Yes	Yes	Yes
Group B		Yes	Yes	
Group C		Yes		

Examples:

- 1) A Georgian cultural manager visits a Ukrainian composers association to discuss and explore possibilities for their involvement in a proposed cultural project.
- 2) A photographer from Turkey visits a Polish foundation to explore and also prepare the ground for a common exhibition and publication.
- 3) A French cultural journalist travelling for a three-day visit to Moldova in order to get acquainted with and report on the state of the Moldavian cultural scene via collaboration with local journalists and media houses.

B) First visit of a cultural network meeting (in line with the ECF's special focus on European trans-national networks): NETWORKING

The reason for travel should be to visit a European cultural network meeting, relevant to the applicant's profession, for the first time. This sort of travel should also entail a degree of explorative travel as well. Exploration would apply to specific parts of the cultural sector relevant to the applicant's professional development and/or lead to the sharing of their acquired knowledge upon returning.

Travel criteria for travels to NETWORK-MEETINGS:

TO:	FROM:	Group A	Group B	Group C
Group A		Yes	Yes	Yes
Group B		Yes	Yes	Yes
Group C		Yes		

Examples

1) A Russian artist travels to Spain to attend a network meeting relevant to his or her professional development and explores possibilities for a possible synergies with participants of the meeting.

2) A Lithuanian cultural operator visits a network meeting in Bulgaria to explore possibilities for establishing professional international contacts for a concrete project proposal.

What exactly will the ECF pay for and what won't it pay for?

The fund will make payments towards **cheap flights** or other means of **budget travel** from the **country of residence** to the country of destination. In certain cases, an allowance will also be awarded. This allowance is meant to pay for accommodation costs. If your project falls under the heading COOPERATION (on the invitation of an NGO), in general the host organization will be asked to pay the accommodation costs.

The amount of the allowance will be calculated according to the average costs of accommodation in the destination country.

The same individual may receive an award no more than twice, and only one award per year.

How do you start to apply for a STEP beyond mobility grant?

Before filling out the online application, all applicants **MUST** create a personal profile on our online meeting place for arts and culture crowd. Go to www.rhiz.eu and join in.

What should you send and when?

There are no deadlines for applications!

However, the completed application must be sent in **EIGHT WEEKS** before the intended date of travel. The ECF will award or reject the application on the basis of a **fully** completed application form, an attached biography, a letter of invitation from the host NGO¹ and any other relevant information.

Please send all these documents in **English only!**

In case several people from the same **group or organization wish to apply**, please indicate this on the application form and provide the contact details and CV/biography of each person. Always use **ONE** application form only, even when applying as a group. Please note that due to budgetary constraints, we can only support a select number of applicants from the same group. When sending in a group application, you **MUST** indicate for each individual his/her role in the project. We advise groups to make an **internal selection** before applying to the STEP beyond mobility fund.

¹ An invitation letter should include:

- Full name and address of host organization
- Name of the contact person within the organization
- Name and address of the individual cooperating with the organization
- Acknowledgment of the cooperation under development
- A version of the work plan, signed/agreed upon by the contact person

Who decides?

An advisory committee of three members (appointed for two years) advises the ECF regarding final decisions on the acceptance or rejection of applications. A decision is made at least four weeks before the date of departure, and the applicant is usually informed within one week of the ECF's and the advisory committee's decisions.

What about payment?

Payment can only be made after the visit has taken place and on receipt of a narrative report on the results of the visit² as well as personal accounts/experiences of your travel and the original transport ticket(s).

Other funding opportunities are also accessible via the ECF sponsored mobility portal On The Move. Please see www.on-the-move.org

For further information please contact the STEP *beyond* team: Mr. Maurits Bartstra stepbeyond@eurocult.org and Mr. Bertan Selim bselim@eurocult.org

For more up to date information on the ECF focus and activities (including examples of travels) please make sure to also read our website at

<http://www.eurocult.org/we-support-cultural-cooperation/programmes/mobility/>

or

www.eurocult.org > Support > Programmes > STEP beyond

² Please find the narrative report form also on this web-page.