

Creating your project idea - a toolkit

About this toolkit

Are you and your partners thinking about applying to the new European Spaces of Culture Call for Proposals, but unsure where to start and how to develop a project proposal based on mutual understanding and peer learning?

This toolkit guides you through some of the main aspects of your project design in preparation for the call. It introduces **five guiding questions** which we recommend should be discussed and answered jointly by all collaborating partners:

1. What is the need?
2. How can we address the need?
3. Who brings in what?
4. What do I commit to?
5. How to organise ourselves?

The toolkit introduces some methods and includes thinking **exercises with templates** to help you develop your partnership and project. It also offers a number of **examples from projects implemented** under European Spaces of Culture previously to help you understand what a good proposal can look like.

How to use the toolkit

The five guiding questions form the chapters of the toolkit. For each question you will find some sub-questions to consider and methods to use. Your answers to the questions can then feed directly into your project proposal application.

The toolkit includes templates and little exercises that can be used to build your project idea. You can fill them out directly here in the document.

Maybe you would like to invite an external facilitator to help you with the development of your idea?

Consider pooling your resources already at this stage in your project design to make that happen.

Remember, this is a joint exercise for all partners concerned, so include them all from the start!

Some tips before you start

Think big
and outside
the box

Make use of
each other's
strengths

Consider
external
advice

Carefully read
the Call for
Proposals

Start your
application
early

Consult the
EUNIC office
for advice

Before you start, familiarise yourself with...



...previous European Spaces of Culture projects

From 2019-2025, 33 projects have been implemented under European Spaces of Culture. Find out more by clicking on each picture!

Before you start, familiarise yourself with...

...Fair Collaboration in international cultural relations

As your project proposal should be based on a well-balanced and developed triangular partnership, it is a good moment to reflect on what fair collaboration is.

Not a toolkit! Fair collaboration in cultural relations: A reflAction

To this end, you can find [here](#) the result of a commission from EUNIC to a team of six experts with diverse profiles and backgrounds to develop a set of user-centred tools for EUNIC members and colleagues working in the field of cultural relations.

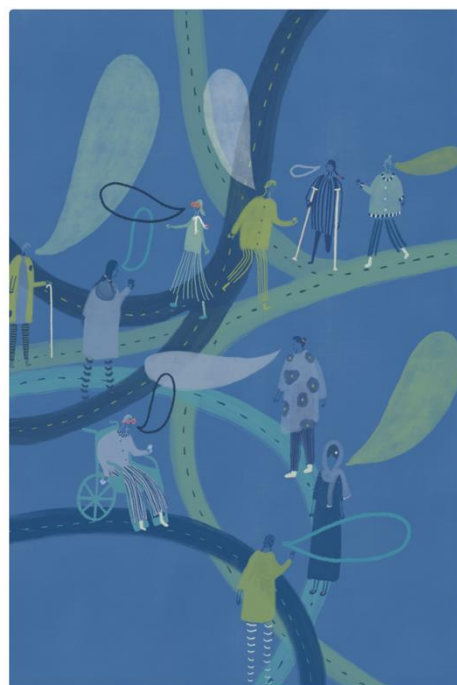
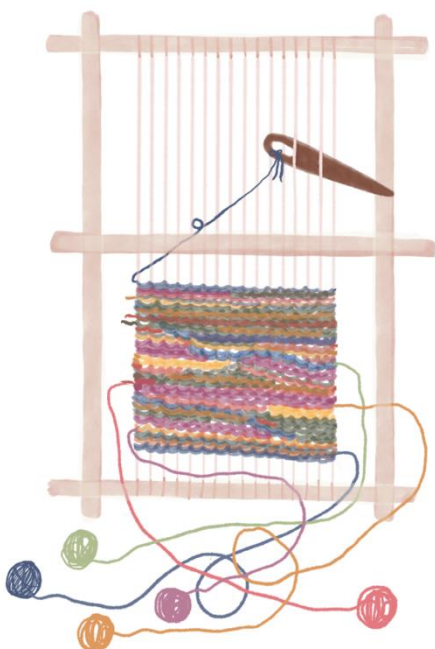
Not a toolkit! is an invitation to reflect and to act. It is composed by a number of components which should not be seen as a static set of tools, but as boundless, where further knowledge, insights and better practice can be steered.

Questions to ask yourself

- What does fair collaboration in cultural relations mean?
- How can fair collaboration look like with multiple stakeholder?
- What could it look like for EUNIC members working with local partner organisations worldwide?

Fairness checker for managing collaboration projects

[Find here](#) a practical guide designed around the project management cycle that allows self and group reflection when embarking on a collaborative project or programme.



5 steps towards your project idea



1. WHAT IS THE NEED?

Explore the local context and its needs and challenges



2. HOW CAN WE ADDRESS THE NEED?

Determine where a multinational collaboration comes in



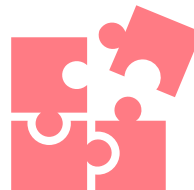
3. WHO BRINGS IN WHAT?

Discuss what each partner brings to the table



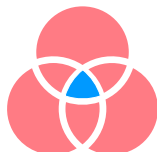
4. WHAT DO I COMMIT TO?

Communicate openly and share thoughts on partnership



5. HOW TO ORGANISE OURSELVES?

Jointly agree on how to structure and organise the partnership



FIND

*the sweet spot:
your idea*

On the next pages, each of the steps will be further elaborated and accompanied by some guiding exercises.



1. What is the need?

Your project should fill a gap that is not addressed so far – there should be a real need for your project. Finding this gap does not mean you found your project idea yet, but it is the first step towards formulating your idea – you found the "why"!

Ask yourself...

- What kind of local needs can you identify?
- What obstacles for developments and changes do you see?
- What is lacking in/what are the needs of civil society?
- What are local limitations and challenges?
- What kind of missed opportunities do you see?
- What are the specific target groups and what are their specific needs?

Outcome

The definition of the local need will lead you to your project's vision and mission. The answer to this question can directly play into the relevance to the local context in your application form.

Methods

Organise **joint brainstorm** sessions with your local partners

Conduct **interviews** with different stakeholders and experts

Collect as many **voices** as possible: Start a survey or social media campaign

Try the exercise on the next page for a more facilitated brainstorming





Back
to the
steps



1. What is the need?

Examples from European Spaces of Culture pilot projects



Emerged from a time of authoritarian regimes in Ethiopia, art and culture is confined into closed spaces like galleries and bars. There are no cultural activities on the streets of Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia – Tibebe Be Adebabay

[Read more](#)



Various activist and civil society initiatives are working to raise the voice of women in society and raise awareness of gender equality and women's rights, but there is still a lack of artistic cultural discussion around the topic in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan - Dybys

[Read more](#)



Although the ex-combatant population has received significant international support for projects that allow them to meet immediate economic needs, cultural opportunities are limited or non-existent.

Colombia – International Community Film Festival

[Read more](#)



Afro-descendant peoples in Latin America represent a group whose human rights must be promoted and protected, given the social and economic inequality in which many of their communities live, which puts at risk their cultural richness.

Peru – AfrOeste

[Read more](#)



Disability is still a sensitive topic in China, often seen in a medical context of patient and treatment. Opportunities for people with disabilities, including artists, to prosper and access education, culture, and society are limited.

China – Diverse as We Are

[Read more](#)



With Indonesia ranked among the top third of countries most vulnerable to climate risks and its waste generation reaching a staggering 18.99 million tons per year, urgent action is imperative.

Indonesia – Design Matters Lab

[Read more](#)



Local creatives in Kenya, especially in the Kibera settlement in Nairobi, face challenges in areas such as market access, sourcing, sharing skills and international reach and are faced with the abundance of textile waste exported by European countries.

Kenya – Kibera Fashion Week

[Read more](#)



Artistic vibrancy in Palestine is stymied by multiple constraints, including the blockade of Gaza and movement restrictions in the West Bank, disrupting the mobility of creatives, reducing their ability to exchange, develop creatively, and showcase their works.

Palestine – Tadafuq / تادفق

[Read more](#)

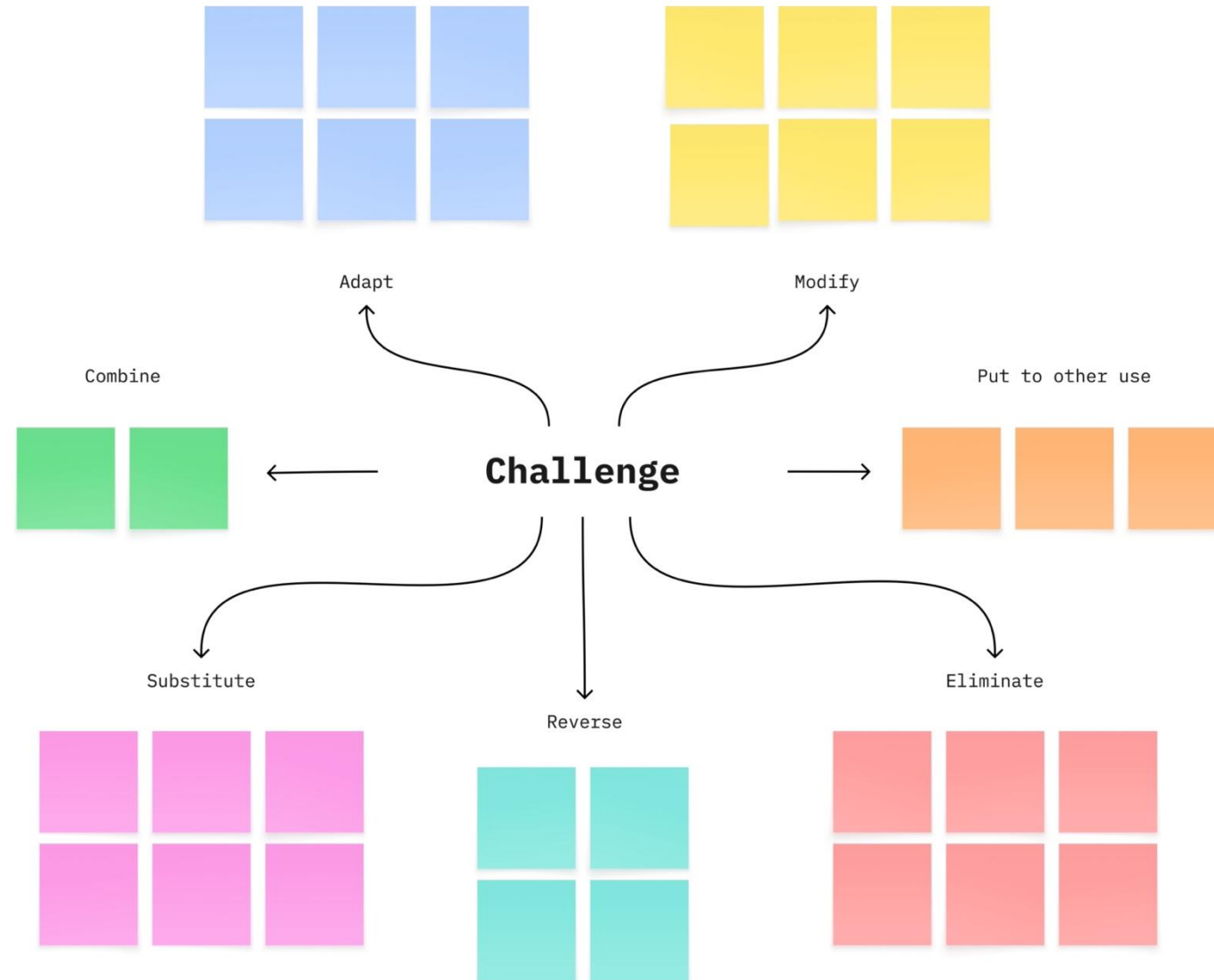


Thirty years after the wars that followed the break-up of Yugoslavia, archival initiatives offer a rich multi-perspective view of the recent history of the region. But they rarely come together and often struggle with repression in their respective local contexts.

Bosnia and Herzegovina – ARchipelago

[Read more](#)

EXERCISE 1: WHAT IS THE NEED?





2. How can we address the need?

Now that you have identified a gap – or maybe even different gaps! – you can think about which problem might be best addressed by a multinational, multi-institutional and multidisciplinary collaboration such as yours.

Ask yourself...

- What problem might be tackled by such a big collaboration?
- How can such a big collaboration of stakeholders from local partner organisations, EUNIC members, and the EU Delegation address the challenge or look for solutions?
- What are our common goals, objectives and target groups?
- What can our collective impact be?

Method

Continue the joint brainstorm sessions with your local partners. Do a **“How might we”** exercise: turn challenges into common opportunities.

Outcome

Determining why the identified need should be tackled by the triangular partnership, will lead you to the goals and objectives of your project proposal. The answer to this question can directly play into the relevance to the local context in your application form and describe your objectives and target groups.





Back
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2. How can you address the need?



The European (diplomatic) institutions were vital to get the required permissions for a cultural festival in public spaces and combine forces to work together with the local project management team.
Ethiopia – Tibebe Adebabay

[Read more](#)



Dybys opens a new, much needed space for public discourse on the role of women in contemporary Kazakhstani society, raising awareness and documenting the diverse stories of underrepresented woman voices in the context of urbanity.
Kazakhstan - Dybys

[Read more](#)



Although the ex-combatant population has received significant international support for projects that allow them to meet immediate economic needs, cultural opportunities are limited or non-existent.
Colombia – International Community Film Festival

[Read more](#)



Implementation of a network of exchange, promotion and learning of the contemporary creative arts of Afro-descendant people in different American countries.
Peru - AfroOeste

[Read more](#)



Since inclusion in Europe is more present on the socio-political agenda, DAWA aims to connect Europe and China by providing more diverse contents and encounters and empower diverse groups of artists.
China - Diverse as We Are

[Read more](#)



Through innovative utilisation of waste materials, the project aims to create eco-friendly products in craft, design, and fashion, benefiting local communities.
Indonesia - Design Matters Lab

[Read more](#)



The Kibera Fashion Week will become a platform for the community to redefine fashion, share new methods for sustainability and bring together stakeholders from around the world to challenge unethical and exploitative consumption.
Kenya – Kibera Fashion Week

[Read more](#)



The project seeks to connect and share knowledge between Palestinian artists and build the capacity of the emerging Palestinian visual arts scene to establish a strong network and engage the next generation.
Palestine – Tadafuq / تدفق

[Read more](#)



Archipelago turns smartphones into an easily accessible archival device, independent of local political restrictions, while bringing together a multitude of archival voices. Historical audio-visual documents tagged with GPS data will be available via an AR app.
Bosnia and Herzegovina – ARchipelago

[Read more](#)

EXERCISE 2: HOW CAN WE ADDRESS THE NEED?





3. Who brings in what?

In such a multi-stakeholder partnership, everybody brings something to the table that contributes to achieving the goals and objectives. Now it is time to identify what each of you can do to add value.

Ask yourself...

- ☛ Do you understand each other's position, values and mission?
- ☛ Which partner has what expertise?
- ☛ What can you offer and what are you interested to get from the other partners?
- ☛ Who has innovative ideas to bring to the table?
- ☛ Are there other potential partners out there to be included and invited to join the project?

Method

Do a **"Staff your project"** exercise:

- Conduct and visualise a mapping of all partners' expertise and complementarities
- Find out what is missing and where to find it

Outcome

Mapping and collecting all the resources and expertise that you have in your collaboration will identify the roles in the partnership and can lead to a draft work plan with activities and an indicative timeline of your proposal.



EXERCISE 3: WHO BRINGS WHAT?

“STAFF YOUR PROJECT”

Partners fill in will what they bring to the table and gaps are being identified

1. Who are our partners?

2. What is their expertise?

3. What do we still need?

4. What other potential partners could provide this?



4. What do I commit to?

This joint project is most likely to thrive when it aligns with your own mission. Finding this clear connection can help justify the time and resources that you will be investing. Share your thoughts and potential worries with the other partners and openly discuss the level of commitment each of the partners can bring to the table.

Ask yourself...

- What is my intrinsic motivation to participate and to make it work?
- Will I be supported by my line manager / my headquarters?
- What am I committing to contribute?
- Will all partners contribute equally?
- Is there a joint vision, mission and goal or is the project serving one organisation more than others?
- What is the additional value of this project for me?

Methods

Compare the project's aims and vision with your organisation's – find common areas and do the **"Aims and visions"** exercise

Engage in open conversation with your partners.

Outcome

This will help you to establish an open communication and foster mutual understanding of the respective needs and restrictions between all partners.

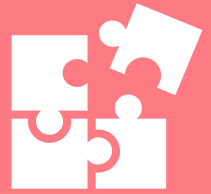


EXERCISE 4: WHAT DO YOU COMMIT TO?

“AIMS AND VISIONS”

Identify your own aims and visions and those of the project and find common areas by drawing lines

	Own	Project
Visions		
Aims		



5. How to organise ourselves?

The interesting but also potentially challenging thing about such a collaboration is that there is no explicit leadership structure in place. It is highly recommended to establish a joint agreement about how you want to run this project.

Ask yourself...

- What is everybody's role?
- Who is in charge of what?
- How will decisions be taken?
- Who takes the lead in the programming of which part?
- Who makes sure that things get delivered?
- How often do we meet?
- What kind of management structure should we set up?
- What are our codes of conduct?
- How do we internally communicate and through what channels?

Methods

Use the mapping of partners' complementarities ("Staff your Project") to set up **roles and tasks**

Set up a **governance structure**, such as a Steering Committee

Do a **"Who Do When"** exercise: redefine the different roles and tasks and set your timeframe.

Formalise as much as you can

Outcome

The establishment of your collaboration model, will ensure a smooth workflow and clear division of tasks. The answers to question 3 and 4 can directly play into the partnership set-up in your application form.



EXERCISE 5: HOW TO ORGANISE?

“WHO/DO/WHEN”

Partners fill in what they will contribute or can recommend one of the partners to take over a task

WHO	DO	WHEN

How often do we meet?

What is our governance structure?

How do we take decisions?

How do we communicate as a team?

Continue working on your idea

Following these steps will have identified the context you are working in, the challenges and opportunities at hand, your partnerships and ultimately will bring you closer to your project idea. While further developing the proposal, you must keep several things in mind.

Ask yourself constantly...

- 🌱 Is the proposal clear?
- 🌱 Is it innovative?
- 🌱 Is it relevant?
- 🌱 Is it feasible?
- 🌱 Is it still a joint effort?
- 🌱 Do we need other partners or expertise?
- 🌱 Are we on track?

Methods

Formulate a pitch for your project and regularly get feedback from partners and audiences with different perspectives.

Hold regular meetings with all partners, offline or online.

How to apply

The following documents need to be submitted:

- 🌱 Application form, completed in English;
- 🌱 Estimated balanced budget, completed in English and drawn up in EUR;
- 🌱 Support letters from all identified project partners.

Find the Call for Proposals and all relevant documents [here](#)

Submit your application to
spacesofculture@eunicglobal.eu

by 29 January 2027, 23:59 CET

Contact

Please contact the team at EUNIC for any questions or inquiries at:

spacesofculture@eunicglobal.eu

Join our webinars!

The Spaces team will be hosting a series of webinars to explain the programme and answer all your questions. You can sign up for the webinars [here](#).



29 October 2026, Webinar 1: Introducing the call



26 November 2026, Webinar 2: Partnership and project support



12 January 2027, Webinar 3: Application clinic

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