

Frequently Asked Questions

European Spaces of Culture: Call for Proposals

This Frequently Asked Questions document accompanies the European Spaces of Culture Call for Proposals launched in October 2026. It answers some of the questions often received in previous applications rounds, mostly concerning the nature of the programme, the partnership requirements, eligibility and focus of proposals, finances, and implementation if selected.

In case your question is not answered in this FAQ document, please do not hesitate to reach out to contact the EUNIC team via spacesofculture@eunicglobal.eu.

Additional documents can help, guide and inspire you from the first step of conceptualising an idea, to shaping your partnerships, and writing and submitting your application:

- EUNIC has developed a **project idea design toolkit**, focusing on main attention points when setting up a collaboration and designing a proposal together. This toolkit offers guiding questions and tips which we recommend are discussed by all involved partners, including thinking exercises to help develop your application. Download it [here](#).
- **Not a toolkit! Fair collaboration in cultural relations: a reflAction** is the result of a commission from EUNIC to a team of six experts with diverse profiles and backgrounds who have developed a set of user-centred tools for EUNIC members and colleagues working in the field of cultural relations. It aims to raise awareness about fair practices in cultural relations and asks important questions partners should be asking of themselves – as individuals and as organisations operating within a system – to challenge and improve practices, policies and procedures when engaging in cultural relations activities. Read more about *Not a toolkit!* [here](#).

Get inspired by previous European Spaces of Culture projects on europeanspacesofculture.eu.

About European Spaces of Culture

In a nutshell: What is the purpose of the programme and where is it coming from?

European Spaces of Culture explores cultural relations practice between the European Union and other parts of the world, by supporting cultural projects that are rooted in a local agenda and are jointly implemented by local cultural and civil society actors, EUNIC members and Delegations of the EU. It started in 2019 as an EU-funded initiative to investigate ways for the EU to be involved in international cultural relations in countries outside the EU, and it has established itself as a funding programme since. It is managed by EUNIC – EU National Institutes for Culture.

About EUNIC

EUNIC is the European network of national-level organisations engaging in international cultural relations. Together with our partners worldwide, we bring cultural collaboration to life in more than 100 countries through a network of over 140 clusters, drawing on the specialist expertise of our members from all EU Member States and associate countries.

There is also Africa-Europe Spaces of Culture. What is the difference with this programme?

From 2025-2028, EUNIC is implementing a Spaces of Culture programme [specifically for Sub-Saharan Africa](#). This programme is modelled after the original European Spaces of Culture. The main difference is that Africa-Europe Spaces of Culture fully focuses on the Sub-Saharan Africa region, and projects can only take place in these countries. The new European Spaces of Culture Call for Proposals, subject of this FAQ document, is therefore open to other non-EU regions of the world: the Americas, Asia-

Pacific, neighbouring countries and regions of the EU, and South-West Asia and North Africa (SWANA). Applications from countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are not eligible under this iteration of European Spaces of Culture.

What exactly does the partial focus on the South Mediterranean mean?

While the European Spaces of Culture programme is open to the abovementioned regions, there is a partial focus on a specific list of countries in the South Mediterranean region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia. In practice this means that, across the two Calls for Proposals published under European Spaces of Culture until 2028, one third of all selected projects will be taking place in this region. This partial focus on the South Mediterranean is in line with the [Pact for the Mediterranean](#), the EU's renewed commitment to strengthening relations with this region.

About the partnership requirements

Can you explain this triangular partnership again? Who are the relevant actors?

All proposals need to be submitted by a triangular partnership of different organisations, all actively engaged in the design and implementation of the project:

- A minimum of three key local cultural and/or civil society partners. Partners may be public bodies. Specific attention should be given to widening access to the partnership to actors who have been less involved in such intercontinental projects.
- A minimum of three EUNIC members is required, with a possible exception for two in countries where there is no EUNIC cluster formalised. They don't have to be based in the country where the project is taking place – some work in different countries at the same time.
- The Delegation of the EU hosted in the relevant country or countries. These are diplomatic missions representing the European Union and have an office in most countries outside the EU. As diplomatic missions, their core focus is often not cultural projects – an indication of their support for the projects will be enough, but, if possible, try together to come with a concrete role to play in the project.

What type of organisations can be local partners?

Local partners are crucial when exploring the local context and identifying needs and challenges to be addressed by the project and therefore should be involved from the very start of the design and planning of the project, until the finalisation and evaluation.

They can come from a wide range of types of organisations that have their roots and are operating in the host country or region, be they civil society organisations in the field of arts, culture, education, etc., interest groups, associations, etc., or public bodies, like local or regional authorities. It should be a legal entity.

As local cultural or civil society organisation, we are interested to participate, but we have no connections to EUNIC members or the EU Delegation. How can we find and reach out to them?

EUNIC has 38 members (see [here](#)). Many of these organisations are active across the world, either through a local institute or an embassy. You may know them or have worked with them before! In case there is a EUNIC cluster present in your country, get in touch via the main contact person – see EUNIC's global cluster presence [here](#). In some countries there is no formalised EUNIC cluster, but some members may still be present. Feel free to get in touch with the EUNIC team to find EUNIC contacts in your country.

EU Delegations are located across the continent, see [here](#). Tip: reach out to them together with identified EUNIC members!

Who should be leading the project and what does the 'coordination team' mean?

One of the main characteristics we strive for is that projects are carried out by a partnership that is based on complementarity, equity, and shared ownership among the local and European partners. We therefore don't ask for only one project team member to take a leading or coordinating role, but a team of three: one partner coming from the EUNIC side, one local partner, and the EU Delegation. This 'coordination team' will function as first point of contact with the EUNIC office and transfer all relevant information to the rest of the partners.

One of the eligibility criteria is involving at least three EUNIC members in the project. Are these members of EUNIC at headquarters' level or of local branches?

The EUNIC members involved can include both members locally based and those at headquarters' level. As the projects should take place outside the EU, it will mostly be members locally based teaming up together with the EU Delegation and local organisations, as they have the local networks. The Ukrainian Institute and British Council, EUNIC's associate members, are eligible to participate as EUNIC members. When in doubt about whether a potential partner can participate in a project, do not hesitate to contact the EUNIC team.

Do the EUNIC members need to be working as a formalised cluster?

This is not required. If there are three different EUNIC members involved you are good to go, regardless of the country. In some countries there is no established cluster, but some EUNIC members do work together or have a presence there, and they can also participate in European Spaces of Culture. The minimum number of EUNIC members in that case is two, as long as they adhere to the partnership criteria and work together with the local partners and EU Delegation.

How should the EU Delegation be involved in the project? Do they just agree on the proposal after the project team has drafted it, or should they co-build the proposal with the project team? Is it just an administrative participation or a deeper involvement?

European Spaces of Culture is there to test how the different partners can work together on equal basis. It is therefore important for all partners, including the EU Delegation, to be involved from the start. This involvement can go in many ways and intensities, depending on their capacity and experience.

The EU Delegation can be an active partner in drafting the project idea, it can play a role in communication, promotion, and advocacy, networking and bringing in interesting partners, as it often has a different network than the cultural institutes. It could also take up an advising role and can place a project in wider EU strategy or policy development, for instance. The EU Delegation is not bound to a national culture or agenda to promote, rather functions as ambassador of EU-wide priority topics, bringing in a wide perspective to be tailored to what's needed on local level. It can be involved as an extra ambassador of the project to give the project more EU presence, which can often help to open doors that otherwise stay closed. In transnational projects, the (regional) network of EU Delegations can also help to make connections across borders.

EU Delegations cannot contribute financially to European Spaces of Culture projects, as this would mean an additional source of funding from the EU, which is not allowed.

To what extent should each partner be involved in the project? What could I bring in as a partner with fewer (financial or human) resources?

Each partner should have a clear role and responsibility and should be involved in some way in the design and implementation of the project. This does not mean all should share the same amount of workload. Each brings in its own contribution, expertise or network corresponding to its capacity. Partners with limited resources or capacity can still play an important role, for example by linking their networks of artists, experts, or otherwise relevant people or organisations to the project; opening their doors for events or meetings; or multiplying the project's communication on their channels. Sometimes a small but crucial contribution can make the difference in a project!

Partners are expected to all be involved and informed during the drafting of the proposal. What does that concretely mean?

All partners listed in the triangular partnership must be aware of the proposal being drafted and the proposed project's main aim and activities and expected roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, partners leading the drafting of the proposal must ensure all have an opportunity to provide input and feedback on the whole application before submission. To ensure this is done in a timely manner, organisations are called on to find their partners first, before elaborating in much detail on the proposal on their own.

Who in the end is expected to submit the proposal?

The proposal may be submitted by any of the organisations listed, on behalf of all partners. It is recommended to include all partners in the submission email, to ensure transparency of communication with the EUNIC office about the submission. The coordination team will receive an acknowledgement of receipt, or, if necessary, an urgent request to complete the application in case something is missing.

Which partner will receive the grant, and what kind of tasks and responsibilities does that come with?

When submitting the application, one of the EUNIC members should be designated by the others to sign a grant agreement with the EUNIC office and receive the awarded grant if selected – call it an 'admin lead partner'. It is this partner's responsibility to receive the funding from the EUNIC office and allocate it to other partners in all transparency and according to internal agreement, and to coordinate the financial reporting back to the EUNIC office. Some of this can be a shared task. Designated partners are required to self-evaluate their experience, capacity and legal possibility to receive such grants.

Is there a limit to the number of organisations we can approach for the partnership?

No, you may approach as many organisations as you wish.

Do all partners sign the support letter?

The support letters are a required part of your application and demonstrate that all partners listed are aware of and support the project. It does not implicate the partners in any financial or legal way. All partners listed in the application are required to sign the standardised support letter. Please use the provided text and put it on your own letterhead, signed by the legal representative of your organisation.

An exception can be made for the EU Delegation, in case signing the letter proves a legal hurdle. An email indicating support to the project, sent to spacesofculture@eunicglobal.eu by an EU Delegation colleague (not by one of the other partners), will be enough.

About the proposal

Does our project need to focus on any particular topic or theme?

European Spaces of Culture invites a vast variety of project formats, themes and topics, focusing on what is relevant in the local context where they take place. There is therefore no prescribed set of topics or themes to adhere to when conceptualising your project idea.

It is however important that the project is designed according to the principles of cultural relations approach, meaning co-creation, joint capacity building and a focus on mutuality. Attention to reaching new or otherwise less represented target groups, such as disabled or other disadvantaged persons, or communities in rural areas or very fragile context, is also strongly recommended

Projects can focus for instance on cultural rights and democracy, artistic freedom, empowerment of cultural professionals, youth participation, resilience and peacebuilding, cultural heritage protection and promotion, innovation, digital and green transformation of the cultural and creative sectors and industries. Projects are encouraged to create spaces for free expression, open dialogue and artistic freedom particularly in fragile or illiberal contexts.

Projects are expected to go beyond a single event or activity, allowing for a broader scope of collaboration and exchange between partners. Furthermore, applicants are required to indicate how their proposed project could contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Should projects be designed to be transferrable to other countries or contexts?

European Spaces of Culture seeks to identify innovative models of collaboration between EUNIC, the EU and local stakeholders that are considered best practice in international cultural relations. These models – be they based on content, methodology or partnerships – would ideally be transferrable to other countries and have the potential to be upscaled. This is something to keep in mind when drafting your proposal.

We are interested in working together with partners across borders. Is it possible to propose a transnational project?

Absolutely. It can be of great added value to expand the project across borders. It will be interesting to see how such proposals promote artist mobility, knowledge sharing, and other kinds of exchange across borders. Entering a cross-border collaboration may add complexity in managing partnership and activities, so make sure the partnership is strong, and tasks are well divided!

The eligibility criteria remain the same – meaning that the triangular partnership of a minimum of three local partners, three EUNIC members, and one EU Delegation still applies for the whole project area covered.

Can we be involved in different applications at the same time?

It is allowed for organisations to be involved in multiple applications at the same time, either as part of a coordination team or as 'regular' partner. Make sure you have the time to invest in the applications (and projects, if selected) you are part of!

Are multiple applications from the same country or city allowed?

This is allowed and could involve the same or different partners. However, it is recommended to focus on one solid and well-elaborated proposal, rather than spreading yourself too thinly. In addition, keep in mind that no more than one proposal per country will be selected, given the competitive nature of the programme.

We have been involved in a project that was part of Spaces of Culture before. Could we apply again for a continuation of this project?

The programme is open to such applications as legacy to previously implemented projects. It will be vital to demonstrate in the application what the impact of the previous project was, how the new proposal evolves and takes learnings from the it, and how the proposal aims to innovate. When elaborating such a proposal, opening the partnership to actors so far not involved in the project, or audiences not reached, will also be key.

In which language should the application be written?

All application documents should be written in English. Feel free to translate and work on the documents in the language most suitable for your partners when drafting them together, but the final submission should all be in English.

The EUNIC team and the jury recognise the global linguistic diversity. Please note that evaluators will not penalise grammatical or language errors. The assessment will focus on the substance, ideas, and relevance of the proposal rather than language accuracy.

Is there a character limit for the application?

Each section in the application form has a character limit. This limit and the uniform documents create a level playing field for all applicants and provides a uniform benchmark for the jury to evaluate the proposals. Make use of the space available but be concrete and direct too – the jury will have quite a few applications to read.

About the funding

Does the project need to be co-financed, or can it be exclusively financed by the Spaces of Culture budget?

Co-funding from partners or other third parties is required and should at least be 5% of the requested grant amount. In-kind contributions can be considered as part of the co-funding. For example, for a requested grant of EUR 45,000, co-funding needs to be at least EUR 2,250, making a total budget of at least EUR 47,250.

For an ambitious project, putting in the minimum co-funding is often not enough, therefore it is advised to seek additional funding. This can come from EUNIC members, or local or national public or private sources.

Note however that other funding from European Union sources, for instance a financial contribution from the EU Delegation or from any EU funding programme, is considered double funding and therefore not allowed. If your project idea does not get selected, of course we do encourage you to look for funding via the EU Delegation for implementation of the project and to keep momentum of the work done thus far.

What if we don't need the maximum of EUR 45,000 for our project? Can we apply for a lower amount?

You are not required to apply for the maximum amount of EUR 45,000. Applying for less will not diminish your chances either, as long as your budget is realistic and in coherence with the project activities as proposed. Note that the requested contribution cannot be increased after you have submitted your proposal.

How specific do we need to be in the budget we submit with our proposal?

As there is only one round of selection and this is the moment to convince the jury, it is crucial to submit a realistic and clear budget that is as detailed as possible. The calculation by units times unit costs should make clear how realistic and appropriate your budget is. The justification on the second tab of the Excel file should provide further explanation. Only the template as provided with the call may be used to submit the budget with your application. This template allows you to add as many rows as needed – make use of the space to detail costs as much as you can.

Be as precise as possible on the income side too – it is important to offer a clear picture of where the co-funding is coming from.

Is it possible to make changes in the budget once selected?

The budget submitted with the application should be indicative, and might be drafted long before foreseen implementation, but be as precise and realistic as you can be at that stage.

However, once your project is selected, you may be invited to revisit this budget, by adding more detail or adapting according to the jury feedback. It may be that in the meantime you have also rallied more co-funding from other sources. After selection and contracting, the budget may still be changed on the go. The EUNIC team needs to be informed of such changes and if it concerns large shifts, consulted beforehand.

What if it turns out that, in the end, we don't spend the full grant we were awarded?

After the end of the project, you will be asked to send a final financial report, stating the final expenses of the project. If in the end it turns out you did not spend the full amount, the final payment (as a rule this is 20% of the grant) will be calculated accordingly. Also: make sure that the final co-funding is still at the level of minimum 5% of the grant!

About implementation

When should our project be implemented and how much time do we have?

Projects should take place in the period between 1 March 2027 and 31 March 2028. Note that this period indicates the maximum window for these projects. For instance, if you plan a project with a total duration of eleven months within said period, that is perfectly fine.

What is expected from us if our project is selected? What does it mean to be part of European Spaces of Culture?

If you are selected to become a European Spaces of Culture project, you will become part of a larger initiative that has the purpose to test innovative collaboration models in cultural relations and in the end to contribute to the development and implementation of the EU strategic approach to international cultural relations.

Results of your project, both based on the activities and their impact and your collaboration process, will be communicated externally and translated into policy and practice recommendations to the EU. This means that your project will have an impact on the global level as well. You will also have the opportunity to become part of a larger community of practice and hear and learn from the challenges and successes from our previous and other current project teams, through our series of labs and other events.

What is expected from us in terms of reporting and evaluation of our project?

There will be a modest mid-term report required, as well as a more elaborated report at the end of the project. After the end of your project implementation, we will require a narrative report on both the results of your activities and the process and the collaboration between all partners, as well as a final financial report. The reporting demands are light compared to many other (EU) funding.

Selected projects receive a toolkit on the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process that is expected from the project teams. This toolkit includes information and tips on setting up your M&E structure, finding the right Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), choosing the best method for collecting data and information, and some inspiration from previous projects. The EUNIC team will also be available to guide you in that process.

What happens when a contact person changes jobs and leaves the project after it is selected?

It is quite common that staff rotations take place during the preparations or implementation of projects. This however should not affect the project. Partners will have the responsibility to hand over relevant information and insights into the running idea or project when new staff arrives. Regular information flow between all project partners is key in this. Setting up a shared online working space will also help keeping the information flow going with new arrivals.

In the event one of the contact persons from the coordinating team leaves, the EUNIC office should be informed about the new colleague(s).