Funded by the
European Union

Deadline:
Friday, 13 February 2026

CALL FOR
PROPOSALS

GRANTS FOR CO-CREATION OF
NEW HERITAGE NARRATIVES

AFRICA-EUROPE PARTNERSHIPS FOR CULTURE

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Implemented by:

GOETHE
INSTITUT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Goethe-Institut invites non-profit, non-governmental organisations in Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe to apply for grants under the "Africa-Europe Partnerships for Culture: Southern Africa" project. This initiative, funded by the European Union, aims to strengthen cultural cooperation within Southern Africa as well as between Southern Africa and Europe, to enhance regional cultural production capacities, and promote intercultural dialogue through the co-creation of new narratives around tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

This Call for Proposals seeks to select at least 8 organisations to lead "Narrative Clusters," collaborating with interdisciplinary groups of artists/creatives to develop innovative stories that increase the visibility and contemporary relevance of their heritage. Selected organisations will receive grants of up to €55,000 to manage these clusters, fund co-productions, and present new narratives to local audiences over an 15-month period.

2. WHAT IS A HERITAGE NARRATIVE IN THIS PROJECT?

A heritage narrative is a story that makes heritage sites and practices come to life. It tells a story that allows people in the community and beyond relate to the heritaege. In that, a heritage narrative contributes to identity building and community building.

These narratives are not automatically present in the heritage itself but are actively created among communities to connect the past with contemporary issues and future possibilities.

Only when we narrate the stories of the food we eat, the blankets we weave, the sites we worship, they come alive and significant to us and future generations.

Thus, heritage narrative conveys significance, meaning, and identity associated with cultural heritage—whether tangible (like monuments, artifacts, landscapes) or intangible (such as traditions, languages, rituals). It's essentially the way communities, institutions, or individuals interpret and communicate the value of heritage to others.

Key aspects of a heritage narrative include the historical context, the cultural significance, its relation to identity and memory as well as its transmission.

3. OBJECTIVES

Overall Objective:

To increase public visibility and understanding of the selected heritage narratives (tangible or intangible) and their contemporary relevance in southern Africa and beyond.

Specific Objectives:

- To support **non-profit, non-governmental organisations** in co-creating new, **interdisciplinary narratives** that communicate the meaning and significance of their heritage element to wide audiences.

- To foster **collaboration** between **organisations** and artists/creatives from at least three southern African countries, with **potential inclusion of European perspectives** where relevant.

- To enhance the **capacity of organisations** for heritage cultural production, audience engagement, and regional/international cooperation.

Expected Results:

- Approximately three artistic co-productions per Narrative Cluster (e.g., performances, exhibitions, installations, films), highlighting the heritage narrative itself as well as its relevance.

- Dissemination or showcasing of co-productions to local and regional audiences through high-profile, multi-day public events.

- Increased visibility of the heritage organisation and its narrative/practice, contributing to intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity.

4. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES: WHAT YOU WILL DO

Selected organisations will lead a Narrative Cluster, managing and coordinating activities with approximately nine artists/creatives (recruited later via a separate call) over a 9-month period. Eligible activities include:

- **Call Development:** Collaborate with the Goethe-Institut to develop a tailored call for proposals to recruit artists/creatives for the Narrative Cluster. You will also assist in selecting the artists/creatives.

- **Cluster Management:** Coordinate and oversee the activities of the Narrative Cluster (6 months), including organising retreats, joint working sessions, and ongoing collaboration among artists/creatives:

  - **Event Organisation:** Host a Narrative Development Retreat (2 weeks) and two joint working sessions within a six-month period to refine heritage narratives, as well as a multi-day local presentation event to showcase co-productions to communities.

  - **Co-Production Support:** Fund the development and production of interdisciplinary artistic works (e.g., literature, film, performing arts, visual arts, crafts, digital/VR/AR productions) that bring your heritage narrative to life. (Include costs for experts and production in the budget, not artist travel or accommodation – see below)

  - **Outreach and Engagement:** Implement local outreach activities to engage communities, including youth and source communities, in the presentation of narratives.

- **Cross-Cutting Issues:** Incorporate measures to promote gender equality (aiming for 50% participation of women and/or women's narratives/perspectives), inclusion of persons with disabilities, and environmentally sustainable/eco-friendly practices in all activities.

Note: A separate call for artists/creatives will cover their transport, flights, accommodation and per diems. Do not include these in your budget.

5. WHAT IS A NARRATIVE CLUSTER?

A Narrative Cluster refers to a **collaborative group led by a non-profit, non-governmental organisation and approximately nine creative/artistic practitioners from at least three different project countries, representing various artistic disciplines**. The purpose of these clusters is to develop co-created heritage narratives into interdisciplinary, multi-modal co-productions that give meaning to tangible and intangible cultural heritage, exploring its contemporary relevance and broader themes over a period of six months.

5.1 Narrative Cluster Information

• A Narrative Cluster is a group of coordinated cultural artists /creatives led by an organisation.

• It is composed of approximately nine interdisciplinary artists/creatives (from a minimum three countries from the six).

• It is focused on developing innovative stories that enhance the visibility and contemporary relevance of tangible or intangible heritage.

| HERITAGE ORGANISATION |
| Artist 1 | Artist 2 | Artist 3 | Artist 4 | Artist 5 | Artist 6 | Artist 7 | Artist 8 | Artist 9 |

Separate call for artists/creatives to be published

Output = New Narrative

Development of themes into stories through various art disciplines (film, music, dance, installations, ceramics, photography, fashion etc.) **to be presented at various events**
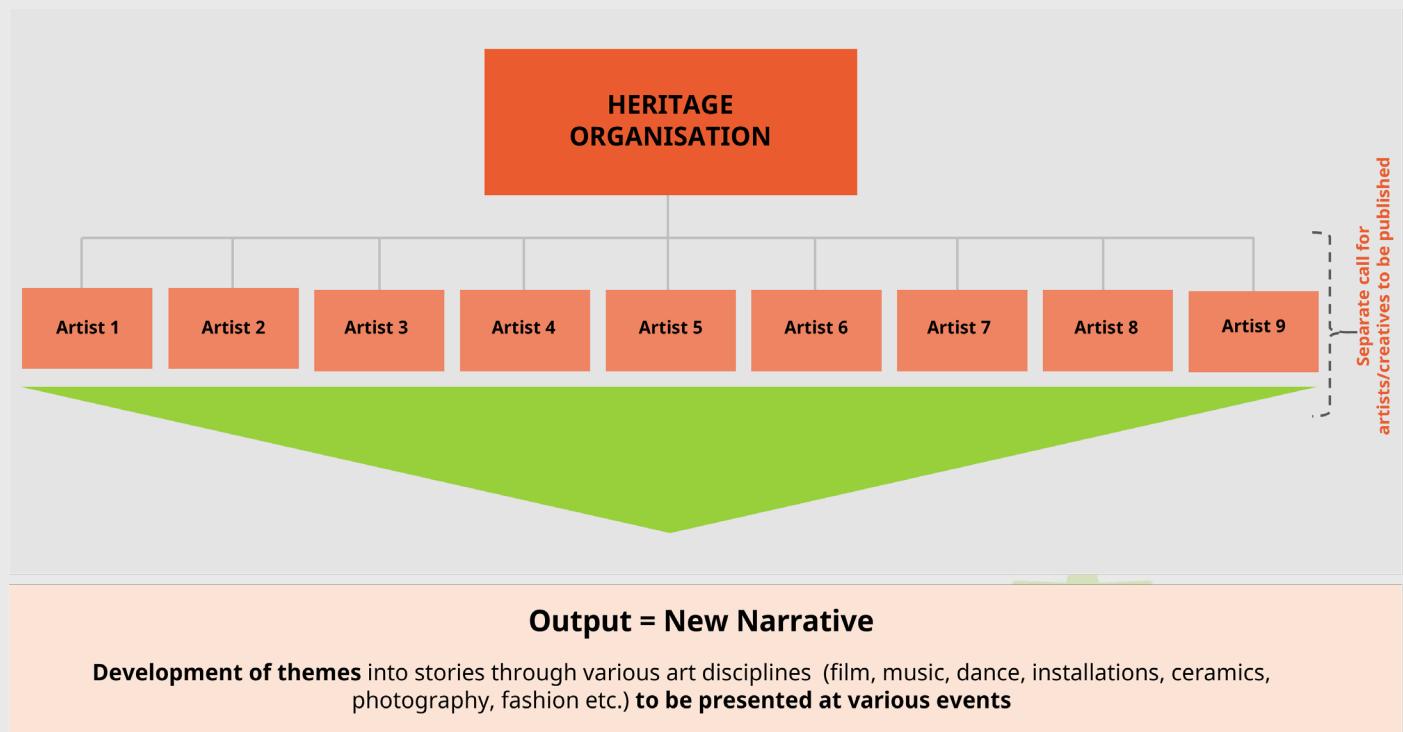
6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
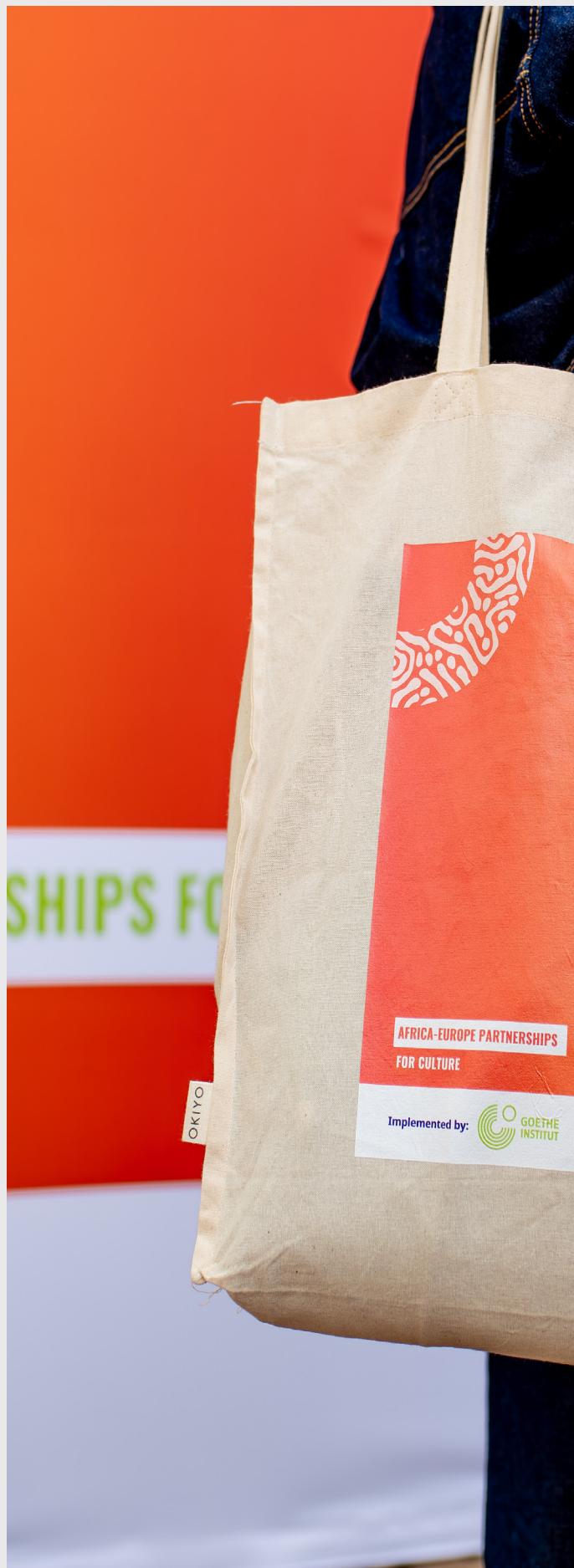
To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **Legal Status:** The applicant must be a non-profit, non-governmental legal entity registered in one of the six project countries (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe).

- **Local Operation:** The organisation must be legally registered and operational in one of the project countries for at least two years, with a demonstrated track record of heritage-related activities.

- **Heritage Connection:** The organisation must manage a tangible heritage site (e.g., archaeological site, historical building) or an intangible heritage practice (e.g., folklore, music, traditional crafts) of one of the six project countries (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe).

- **Non-Urban Focus:** Preference will be given to organisations representing lesser-known heritage sites or practices (with particular relevance and importance for local communities and with limited geographical reach.), particularly those outside major urban centres.

The organisation will be selected during this call for proposals round. Artists/Creatives will be selected via a separate call for proposals.

7. AWARD CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Thematic Approach:** Relevance and clarity of the proposed heritage topics, themes, or stories, and their potential to resonate with contemporary audiences in southern Africa and beyond. (30%)

- **Organisational Capacity:** Ability to manage a Narrative Cluster, including administrative, financial, and logistical capacity to coordinate artists/creatives and events. (15%)

- **Working Facilities:** Access to adequate facilities (e.g., spaces for retreats, workshops, or presentations) to support artists/creatives in developing co-productions. (Heritage organisations do not necessarily need to own the facilities.) (20%)

- **Motivation and Collaboration:** Clarity of motivation and commitment to work collaboratively with interdisciplinary, international artists/creatives. (20%)

- **Outreach Commitment:** Quality and feasibility of proposed local outreach activities to engage communities, alongside a commitment to broader dissemination of co-productions/audience development. (15%)

Selection Considerations:

- The selection process will aim for geographical diversity across the six countries, a mix of tangible and intangible heritage practices, and representation of a variety of themes, lesser-known sites, and narratives.

- Gender equality and inclusion will be prioritised, ensuring women and women's narratives are well-represented in project teams and beneficiaries, and persons with disabilities have access to activities.

- Environmental sustainability will be assessed, favouring proposals that incorporate eco-friendly practices.

- **Selection priority will be given to organisations in Eswatini, Lesotho and Botswana as they lack representation in the first round of selections.**

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Grant Amount: Up to €55,000 per selected organisation, based on a detailed budget submitted with the application. Budget template will be provided on GAP. No other template will be accepted.

Number of Grants: At least 8 grants will be awarded across the six project countries.

Payment Structure: Grants will be disbursed in instalments, subject to milestone-based progress and financial reviews to ensure compliance with project objectives.

Eligible Costs: Staff costs, event organisation (narrative development retreats, local presentations), co-production funding (materials, equipment hire, ect.), travel, accommodation, outreach activities, and costs related to accessibility (e.g., adaptations for persons with disabilities) and environmental sustainability.

8.1 Ineligible costs

- Debt Repayment: Costs for paying off existing debts

- Purchases of land or buildings

- Currency exchange losses

- Seed funding or initial capital used to launch a new business

- Costs related to raising additional funds and other fundraising activitie

- Organisation operational costs and activities not directly linked to the project

- Salary top-ups

- Costs not incurred during the project implementation period

- Purchase of alcohol

- Interdisciplinary artists/creatives travel and accommodation

Budget Assessment: The indicative grant amount will be calculated based on the submitted budget, assessed for cost-effectiveness and plausibility. Final payments will reflect eligible costs incurred.

Staff Cost Limit: As a good practice, staff costs should be budgeted for no more than 20% of the total project budget. Adherence to this guideline is strongly recommended.

Additional Support:

- The selected organisations will participate in capacity-building workshops on gender equality, environmental sustainability, and project management.

- The Goethe-Institut will provide logistical and technical support, including access to experts and networks to enhance project implementation.

9. APPLICATION PROCESS

Submission Platform: Applications must be submitted via the Goethe-Application Portal (GAP) at **Goethe Application Portal**. The GAP ensures a transparent, user-friendly process compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) data security standards. **No applications will be accepted via email.**

9.1 Application Requirements:

Organisational Profile: Legal registration details, proof of non-profit status, and a brief overview of the organisation's heritage-related activities (max. 500 words).

Heritage Description: Description of the tangible or intangible heritage site/practice managed or represented, including its cultural significance and contemporary relevance (max. 1,000 words).

Proposed Themes: Ideas for heritage topics, themes, or stories to be developed into narratives, and their potential for interdisciplinary artistic expression (max. 1,000 words).

Collaboration Plan: Describe your motivation and strategy for collaborating with artists/ creatives within the narrative cluster, focusing on how each artistic discipline guides your approach.(max. 500 words).

Outreach Strategy: Plan for local presentation events and community engagement, including measures for gender equality, inclusion, and environmental sustainability (max. 500 words).

Budget: Detailed budget outlining costs for cluster management, events, co-productions, and outreach activities, ensuring cost-effectiveness **(template provided in GAP. No other budget template will be accepted).**

9.2 Supporting Documents

I. Self-Declaration (provided in GAP).

II. Proof of legal registration of Organisation

III. Copy of official National ID document of primary representative

IV. Copy of official National ID document of secondary representative

V. Financial statements (last two years – from at least 2022-2023)

VI. Proof of capacity (document detailing infrastructure, workspaces etc. including photos of facilities, equipment and accommodation)

VII. Detailed Budget (use template provided on GAP)

VIII. Proof of Bank Account (Bank confirmation letter or bank statement in the name of the heritage organisation) not older than three months

IX. Tax compliance certificate

X. Two signed and dated Reference Letters from project partners your organisation has previously worked with. Support letters from the EU Delegations and the Goethe Institut will not be accepted.

XI. In addition, you are welcome to provide support / proof of performance in other grant projects that the organisation has managed in the past to support your application.

Website and/or social media: Links to website and/or social media

9.3 Timeline:

Call Publication: 5 January 2026

Application Deadline: 13 February 2026

Deadline for Enquires: 6 February 2026

Evaluation and Selection: 16 - 27 February 2026

Notification and Contracting: 2 – 6 March 2026

Project Activities Start: 16 March 2026

Evaluation Process:

- Applications will be reviewed by an independent jury of cultural and heritage experts, ensuring transparency, non-discrimination, and equal treatment
- Applicants will be notified of outcomes via GAP.
- Organisations can only submit one application. In the case that two applications are submitted, only the last one submitted will be evaluated.

10. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Applicants are required to integrate the following principles into their proposals, aligning with the project's human rights-based approach:

- **Gender Equality:** Aim for 50% participation of women and women's narratives in project teams and activities. Include measures to support female applicants (e.g., family-friendly retreats)

- **Inclusion:** Ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities through budget allocations for adaptations and support for mobility needs.

- **Environmental Sustainability:** Ensure environmental sustainability and address environmental themes in narratives where relevant.

- **Human Rights:** Adhere to principles of transparency, non-discrimination, and meaningful community participation, ensuring local voices shape the narratives.
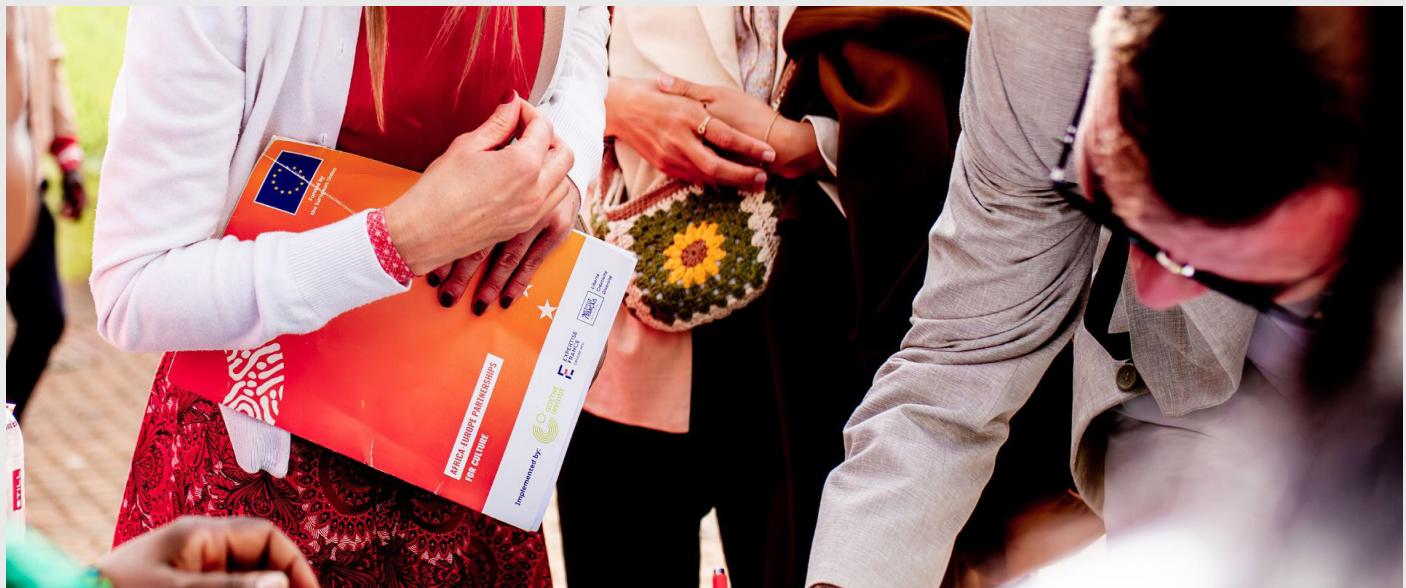
11. SUPPORT AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Application Support:

- FAQs are available on the **goethe.de/aepc**
- A capacity-building workshop will be provided post-selection to clarify contractual obligations, including standards on integrity, non-discrimination, sustainability, narrative reporting, and financial administration.

Contact:

Goethe-Institut Johannesburg: eup-ssa@goethe.de
Website: goethe.de/aepc
No queries will be accepted from **6 Febuary 2026**. Please ensure you interact with the application well in advance.

12. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Project Context:** The project is part of a broader EU initiative to foster EU-Africa and intra-Africa cultural cooperation, with a focus on lesser-known heritage to promote diversity and dialogue. It is complemented by the UNESCO sub-component of the Southern Africa programme, enhancing synergies in heritage promotion.

- **Next Steps:** Selected organisations will participate in Entanglement Workshops to explore heritage narratives and inform the artists/creatives call for proposals.

- **Future Opportunities:** Grantees may apply for additional audience development grants (e.g., for traveling festivals or international mobilities) in later project phases.

13. EXCLUSION

The following organisations are excluded from this call for proposals:

- Organisations in formal operation (formally registered) for less than two years.
- Organisations on the European Union sanctions list.

GLOSSARY

Co-creation / co-production: The act of producing 2 – 3 interdisciplinary works demonstrating a new narrative.

Goethe Application Portal (GAP): This is the Goethe Application Platform. It is the central platform for all interactions related to your grant. It is where you submitted your application and received your response, and it will continue to serve as your main point of contact throughout the grant period.

Through GAP, you will be able to:

- Receive and send all official communication
- Access and sign your contract
- Submit payment requisition forms
- Complete activity and financial report
- Requests top-ups

Intangible Heritage: non-physical, living cultural practices, expressions, knowledge, and traditions passed down through generations, such as, oral traditions and storytelling, traditional music, dance, rituals, folklore, craft-making techniques, social customs, festivals, or spiritual beliefs.

Interdisciplinary groups of artists/creatives: diverse teams of approximately nine creative professionals from different artistic disciplines (e.g., visual artists, filmmakers, performers, writers, musicians, digital creators, designers) who collaborate under the leadership of a selected heritage organisation. These groups are recruited later through a separate call for proposals (developed with input from selected/funded organisations). They must also include participants from at least three Southern African countries, with optional European involvement where relevant.

Narrative Cluster (also referred to as Cluster): a collaborative group led by a non-profit, non-governmental organisation and approximately nine creative/artistic practitioners from at least three different project countries, representing various artistic disciplines.

New narratives: Innovative stories that enhance the visibility and contemporary relevance of tangible or intangible heritage.

Tangible Heritage: physical, material elements of cultural heritage such as archaeological sites, historical buildings or monuments, traditional tools, crafts, artifacts, cultural landscapes or sacred natural sites.

Important: Any messages sent to you via GAP will also be delivered to your registered email address. Please monitor both your GAP account and email inbox to ensure you don't miss important updates or deadlines.