



EU4CULTURE II – SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

RESTRICTED CALL FOR PROPOSALS: STANDARD CAPACITY BUILDING
UNDER THE EU4CULTURE II PROGRAMME

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ➔ CCS – Cultural and Creative Sectors
- ➔ CEST - Central European Summer Time
- ➔ EaP - Eastern Partnership
- ➔ EU - European Union
- ➔ EUNIC – EU National Institutes for Culture
- ➔ GAP – Goethe Application Portal

QUICK GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Purpose	To design and deliver a coherent Standard Capacity Building programme for professionals involved in EU4Culture II Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations. The programme should provide a shared foundation of knowledge and practical skills and support participants in applying learning to their ongoing work.
Who can apply	One eligible EUNIC member organisation applying alone, or a consortium of two or three organisations led by an eligible EUNIC member organisation. The single or lead applicant must be a legally registered non-profit cultural entity in an EU Member State, be active in the Eastern Partnership countries and have at least ten years of relevant experience. Co-applicants are not required to be EUNIC members but must be legally registered non-profit organisations with relevant experience and operational capacity.
Total grant size	One grant of up to EUR 500,000 .
Project duration	November 2026 – July 2028 (including Inception Phase: Nov 2026 – Jan 2027)
Application deadline	5 October 2026, 18:00 CEST.
Who will benefit from this Grant	Leaders, managers, coordinators, facilitators and other CCS professionals directly involved in EU4Culture II Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations.
Programme structure	Three modular learning rounds for separate or partly overlapping participant cohorts. The programme must include a substantial face-to-face learning dimension, supported where appropriate by online preparation and follow-up.
Main learning areas	Leadership and strategic vision; collaboration and stakeholder engagement; applying learning in practice; digital transformation, sustainability; CCS business and innovation; organisational and management skills.
What can be funded	Programme design and delivery; workshops and expert sessions; practical assignments and reflection activities; cross-country and country-specific learning activities; trainers, facilitators and relevant service providers; learning materials and practical tools; participant travel, accommodation, visas, insurance, subsistence, venues, technical support and accessibility measures.
How to apply	Applications must be submitted in English through the Goethe Application Portal (GAP) with all mandatory annexes before the deadline.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 About EU4Culture II

EU4Culture II - Sustainable Creative Ecosystems (2025-2029) is a regional programme fully funded by the European Union and implemented by the Goethe-Institut. The programme operates across the Eastern Partnership region (EaP), covering Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and the Belarusian cultural and creative sector (CCS) community in exile.

The overall objective of EU4Culture II is to strengthen the role of culture as a driver of economic growth, social development and resilience across the Eastern Partnership region. To this end, the programme promotes sustainable creative ecosystems, empowers cultural and creative sector actors, and strengthens their capacities, cooperation and connections with wider regional and European networks.

EU4Culture II delivers this objective through two complementary components:

- **Creative Platforms – Living Labs:** multi-stakeholder creative platforms established in selected regions of the participating countries, applying a co-creation methodology to develop and implement Creative Ecosystem Development Roadmaps for the local cultural and creative sectors.
- **Cultural Intermediary Organisations:** organisations that develop and test structured value propositions – practical solutions responding to concrete needs of cultural and creative sector actors in the participating countries and communities.

Living Labs bring together public, private, civil society and academic actors to collaboratively identify local ecosystem needs and co-create Creative Ecosystem Development Roadmaps addressing identified sectoral and cross-sectoral challenges and opportunities.

Cultural Intermediary Organisations strengthen the wider ecosystem by developing structured value propositions for a clearly identified target group, sector, geographic area or ecosystem need. Unlike Living Labs, which operate within defined geographic focus areas, Intermediary Organisations may act across regions, sectors or thematic challenges by supporting, connecting, representing or strengthening other cultural and creative sector actors. Their value propositions may take the form of services, support models, platforms, market-access mechanisms or advocacy tools and are developed through research, stakeholder consultation, co-creation and testing.

Both components aim to strengthen sustainable, inclusive and connected cultural ecosystems. EU4Culture II supports the selected Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations through financing, mentoring, capacity building, internationalisation and peer exchange.

Within this framework, this Restricted Call for Proposals will support the design and delivery of the **Standard Capacity Building programme** for Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations selected under EU4Culture II.

1.2 Rationale and the Purpose of this Call

Programme findings revealed that structured professional development remains limited across the participating countries: 54.2% of CCS representatives surveyed reported no capacity-building activity in the previous two years. Recurring gaps exist in organisational and strategic management, leadership, entrepreneurship, communication and digital transformation. Respondents expressed a clear preference for practical, flexible and context-sensitive learning that can be directly applicable to their professional work.

This Restricted Call for Proposals aims to select and to contract one eligible organisation or eligible consortium to design and deliver a Standard Capacity Building programme for the Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations selected under EU4Culture II.

Overall Objective: To strengthen the knowledge and capacities of CCS professionals involved in EU4Culture II Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations, enabling them to contribute more effectively to sustainable cultural and creative ecosystems.

Specific Objectives:

- establish a shared foundation of knowledge and skills on core themes for CCS development and related cross-cutting issues;
- support participants to apply gained learning in the work of their Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations, including implementation of Roadmaps and Value Propositions;
- strengthen participants' ability to work collaboratively with stakeholders, partners and communities within their cultural and creative ecosystems;
- strengthen professional exchange among participating organisations.

Expected Results:

- participants strengthen their knowledge, competences and professional confidence in the selected thematic areas;
- participants apply acquired learning within the work of their Living Labs or Intermediary Organisations;
- participating organisations demonstrate increased capacity to integrate and disseminate relevant knowledge internally;
- practical learning resources and methodologies developed under the programme remain available for continued use throughout EU4Culture II;
- stronger professional exchanges are established among participating organisations across the Eastern Partnership region.

Note on quality assessment: the quality of the proposed action will be assessed not primarily by the number of activities delivered, but by its expected contribution to lasting changes in participants' professional practice, organisational capacity and collaboration within the EU4Culture II ecosystem.

1.3 What the Grant Beneficiary(-ies) Will Deliver

The grant beneficiary will be responsible for designing and delivering one coherent Standard Capacity Building Programme for professionals participating in EU4Culture II Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations. The Standard Capacity Building Programme shall:

- Comprise three modular learning rounds delivered during the implementation period;
- Combine substantial face-to-face learning with appropriate online preparation and follow-up;
- Support participants in applying learning directly within their professional practice;
- Generate practical learning resources that remain available after programme completion;
- Complement, not duplicate, other EU4Culture II support measures, including Internationalisation, Bespoke Capacity Building and organisation-specific mentoring.

1.4 Budget and Duration

Budget: one grant of up to **EUR 500,000** is available to design and deliver the Standard Capacity Building programme. The requested budget must be proportional to the proposed programme design, activities, geographic coverage, expected participation and anticipated results. Detailed eligible costs requirements are provided in Section 7.

Duration: The action is expected to be implemented from **November 2026 until July 2028**, beginning with a three-month inception period (November 2026 – January 2027) during which the grant beneficiary will:

- Coordinate with the EU4Culture II team and participating organisations;
- Conduct needs analysis and refine learning priorities;
- Finalise participant arrangements, logistics and delivery planning;
- Develop the monitoring framework;
- Submit an inception report.

During the inception period, the selected grantee will refine its detailed content, participant arrangements, sequencing and calendar and coordinate these with the Internationalisation action. The Goethe-Institut will oversee implementation and facilitate coordination between the respective grantees. This process will also take account of Bespoke Capacity Building and organisation-specific mentoring to avoid duplication.

The Goethe-Institut will make available relevant non-personal programme information, research, mappings and needs assessments available from the selected Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations. Personal contact details will be shared only with consent or through Goethe-Institut-facilitated introductions.

All programme activities must be completed by **31 July 2028**. Reporting requirements are set out in Section 8.

1.5 Target Participants and Geographic Scope

The Capacity Building Programme shall support CCS professionals involved in EU4Culture II Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations. Participants may include leaders, managers, coordinators, facilitators and other professionals directly involved in the work of the targeted organisations and collaborative structures.

Participants should be able to

- Apply learning in their professional practice;
- Contribute actively to the programme;
- Share relevant learning within their organisations or collaborative structures.

Participation may vary between learning rounds and activities according to participants' roles, needs and the relevance of the proposed content. The programme must provide sufficient continuity to support meaningful learning and sustained peer relationships.

Participants may include representatives of local authorities where they are directly involved in a Living Lab. The confirmed list and profiles of participating Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations will be provided to the selected grantee during inception.

Geographic Coverage: The programme must provide learning opportunities for participation from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the Belarusian cultural and creative sectors community in exile. Applicants may propose the countries and locations in which face-to-face activities will take place, considering accessibility, security, travel and visa conditions, environmental considerations, learning objectives and cost-effectiveness.

The lead grant beneficiary is responsible for organising and financing all arrangements required for participation, including travel, accommodation, local transportation, visa support, insurance, subsistence, venues, technical support, participant communication and necessary accessibility measures. Participants and their organisations should not be expected to finance essential participation costs.

The working language is **English**. All principal learning activities, facilitation, communication and core learning materials must be provided in English.

1.6 Themes and Learning Priorities

Applicants are expected to propose a coherent learning framework that responds to the objectives of this Call rather than attempting to cover all possible capacity-building needs. The thematic areas below indicate the expected scope of the programme but do not prescribe a fixed curriculum or equal weighting of topics. Applicants are encouraged to justify their thematic choices based on participant needs, programme objectives and expected results.

Three Capability Areas:

1. Leadership, strategic vision and decision-making - Participants should strengthen their ability to exercise leadership and professional judgement, make informed decisions, respond to changing conditions and contribute to organisational learning and resilience.

2. Collaboration and stakeholder engagement - Participants should strengthen their ability to facilitate participatory and co-creative processes, engage diverse stakeholders, build trust and collaboration and understand their role within wider cultural and creative ecosystems.

3. Applying learning in practice - Participants should have opportunities to apply relevant ideas and methods to real challenges, test different approaches, reflect on the results and use what they learn to improve their subsequent work. Relevant learning should also be shared within their organisations or collaborative structures.

Broad Thematic Areas - The programme should address the following broad thematic areas, while applicants may determine their relative emphasis and how they are integrated into the three learning rounds:

- digital transformation;
- sustainability;
- CCS business and innovation;
- organisational and management skills.

Note: depth, coherence and practical application will be valued over broad thematic coverage. More specialised, technical or organisation-specific needs will be addressed in the framework of another EU4Culture action: *“Bespoke Capacity Building”*.

1.7 Programme Approach and Design Principles

The Standard Capacity Building programme must comprise **three modular learning rounds** delivered during the implementation period. The rounds should be designed for separate or partly overlapping cohorts and should not be treated as three consecutive levels that every participant must complete. Participants may take part in one or more rounds where this is relevant to their roles and learning needs.

TABLE 1- KEY DESIGN REQUIREMENTS:

Principle	Description
Integrated Structure	Rounds designed for separate or partly overlapping cohorts; not three consecutive levels; participants may take part in one or more rounds where relevant

Face-to-face focus	Substantial in-person learning and exchange; online elements support preparation, continuity, accessibility and follow-up, but do not replace central face-to-face experience
Practice relevance	Learning must be applicable to participants' real work; opportunities to apply learning to actual challenges, observe outcomes, reflect and improve
Quality standards	Three rounds follow common quality standards while allowing differences in content, participant composition and format
Peer continuity	Simple mechanisms for participants to remain in contact between activities (peer groups, online check-ins, shared communication channels)
Integrated process	Programme designed as integrated learning process, not series of isolated training events; each round combines preparation, collaborative learning, practical application and structured reflection
Practical resources	Production of materials and resources that remain useful after activities end (tools, templates, guides, case examples, selected recordings); complete online course not required

Inception Period Refinement: The detailed programme design may be refined during the inception period. However, the application must present a credible overall concept, participation model, methodology and indicative structure.

Eligible Activities - must form part of a coherent Standard Capacity Building programme and contribute directly to the objectives, expected results and learning priorities of this Call. Applicants are expected to propose an integrated programme of activities rather than a collection of individual events.

TABLE 2- ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE (BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO):

Category	Activities
Programme design & coordination	Design, planning, coordination and delivery; refinement during inception period
Learning delivery	Organisation and delivery of three modular learning rounds; workshops, seminars, facilitated peer learning, expert sessions, study visits, practical assignments, reflection activities
Geographic scope	Cross-country learning activities; country-specific components where justified by participant needs or contextual circumstances
Expert engagement	Engagement of trainers, facilitators, mentors, practitioners, researchers, moderators and other external experts
Resource development	Development, production and dissemination of practical learning resources – toolkits, templates, guidance materials, case studies, digital resources and other reusable outputs
Monitoring & evaluation	Monitoring participant engagement and learning outcomes; feedback collection; programme evaluation; documentation of lessons learned
Coordination	Communication, coordination and networking activities directly supporting programme implementation and participant engagement
Participant support	Travel, accommodation, local transportation, visa support, insurance, subsistence, venue hire, interpretation (where justified), technical services and reasonable accessibility measures

Operational flexibility: Applicant(s) are not required to define every operational detail at application stage. Selection of individual experts, precise locations, detailed delivery schedules and other operational arrangements may be refined during the inception period, provided the overall programme concept, methodology, expected results and implementation approach remain substantially unchanged.

Quality Assurance and Monitoring - The Standard Capacity Building Programme shall incorporate a systematic approach to quality assurance, monitoring and continuous improvement. Applicants are expected to demonstrate how the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the programme will be maintained and enhanced over time.

TABLE 3- QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Description
Quality consistency	Ensure consistent quality of learning activities across different rounds, trainers, experts and delivery partners
Participant monitoring	Monitor engagement, attendance, satisfaction and learning outcomes using appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods
Application assessment	Assess practical application of learning within participants' professional practice and organisations
Feedback integration	Collect, analyse and use participant feedback to improve subsequent learning rounds
Content relevance	Monitor relevance of content and adjust delivery approaches where justified by emerging needs or experience
Risk management	Identify and manage risks affecting quality, accessibility or effectiveness
Lessons learned	Document lessons and good practices to support organisational learning and future programme development

Proportionality principle: The quality assurance approach should be simple, practical and proportionate – not a complex control system, but ensuring programme implementation remains responsive, participant-centred and results-oriented.

The detailed quality assurance framework (indicators, monitoring tools, feedback mechanisms, internal quality management procedures) may be refined during inception in consultation with the Goethe-Institut, building upon the approach in the approved application without substantially altering the programme concept.

1.8 What Is Not Funded

The following activities and expenditure are not eligible under this call:

TABLE 4- NON-ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURES

Non-Eligible Category	Specification
Standalone activities	Isolated workshops, conferences, study visits or other activities not forming part of a coherent learning process
Online-only delivery	Programmes delivered exclusively online, except temporary adaptations agreed with the Contracting Authority (here: the Goethe-Institut)

Duplication of other support	Organisation-specific mentoring, coaching, consultancy or tailored training duplicating other EU4Culture II support (including organisation-specific mentoring or Bespoke Capacity Building)
Non-capacity-building focus	Activities focused primarily on international matchmaking, market access, network membership or mobility rather than capacity building
Formal education	Formal degree programmes, individual scholarships or long-term academic/professional qualifications
Artistic production	Artistic production, direct implementation of Roadmaps or Value Propositions, or financial support to participating individuals/organisations
Onward funding	Sub-grants, loans or other forms of onward financial support
Infrastructure	Construction, renovation, purchase of land or buildings, or acquisition of major equipment
Self-interest	Activities primarily benefiting the applicant's own staff, institutional development, commercial interests or existing networks rather than designated EU4Culture II participants
Double funding	Costs already financed through another EU grant or other funding source

Note: Conferences, professional events, country-specific activities and external expertise may be included where they form an integral and justified part of the learning programme. Limited materials or equipment may be eligible where necessary, proportionate and directly linked to programme delivery.

2 WHO CAN APPLY?

Applications may be submitted by:

1. One eligible EUNIC member organisation applying alone; or
2. A consortium of two or three legally registered non-profit cultural organisations led by an eligible EUNIC member organisation.

In the case of a consortium, one organisation must act as Lead Applicant. The remaining consortium members act as Co-applicants.

2.1 Eligible Applicants

Single or Lead Applicant

A single applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the Lead Applicant must:

- be a legally registered non-profit cultural entity;
- be registered in a Member State of the European Union;
- be a EUNIC member organisation;
- be active in the Eastern Partnership countries, demonstrated through relevant programmes, partnerships or operational experience;
- have at least ten years of experience in cultural development, capacity building, international programme management or another field relevant to the proposed action.

The single or Lead Applicant must have the legal, financial and operational capacity necessary to assume responsibility for a grant of this size and complexity.

Co-applicants

Co-applicants are not required to be EUNIC member organisations. Each Co-applicant must:

- be a legally registered non-profit organisation;
- have an organisational mandate and relevant experience in cultural development, adult or professional learning, capacity building, organisational development, programme delivery or another field relevant to the proposed action;
- demonstrate sufficient operational and financial capacity to perform its proposed role;
- participate actively in the design and implementation of the action;
- meet the compliance and exclusion requirements set out in these Guidelines.

The consortium as a whole must demonstrate the experience, expertise, geographic understanding and operational capacity required to design and deliver the Standard Capacity Building programme across the EU4Culture II participating countries and the Belarusian CCS community in exile.

2.2 Applications by a Consortium

For consortium applications, one organisation must act as Lead Applicant. The consortium application must explain each member's contribution and how the partnership strengthens programme delivery.

The application must clearly explain:

- the role and responsibilities of each consortium member;
- the specific expertise and added value contributed by each member;
- the activities and outputs for which each member will be responsible;
- the allocation of costs between consortium members;
- the consortium's internal coordination, decision-making and quality-assurance arrangements.

Consortium members should bring complementary expertise, experience or geographic knowledge. Their responsibilities must be substantive and should avoid unnecessary duplication. Consortium applications will not automatically receive preference over applications submitted by a single eligible organisation. The relevance and added value of the proposed consortium will be assessed as part of the quality evaluation.

The lead applicant must meet all eligibility requirements applicable to the lead applicant under Section 2.1. Each co-applicant must meet the eligibility requirements applicable to co-applicants under Section 2.1.

Lead Applicant responsibilities:

- ➔ submits the application on behalf of the consortium;
- ➔ coordinates and administers the action;
- ➔ signs the grant contract;
- ➔ manages the grant and communications with the Goethe-Institut;
- ➔ assumes overall legal and financial responsibility for implementation;
- ➔ ensures programme coherence, quality assurance, reporting and compliance;
- ➔ ensures that all Co-applicants meet the eligibility and compliance requirements applicable to them;
- ➔ ensures that all Co-applicants have formally agreed to the application and consortium arrangements before submission

Co-Applicant responsibilities:

- ➔ participate actively in the design and implementation of the action;
- ➔ implement the activities and deliver the outputs assigned to them in the approved application;
- ➔ provide the Lead Applicant with all information and supporting documentation required for programme management, reporting, monitoring and audit;
- ➔ comply with the applicable grant, procurement, accounting, visibility, data-protection and record-retention requirements;
- ➔ immediately inform the Lead Applicant of any circumstance affecting their eligibility, capacity or ability to implement their responsibilities.

Approved costs incurred by Co-applicants are subject to the same eligibility, accounting, procurement, reporting and audit requirements as costs incurred by the Lead Applicant. The Lead Applicant remains responsible to the Goethe-Institut for the performance and compliance of the consortium as a whole.

2.3 Operational Capacity

Applicants must have the expertise, staff and operational resources necessary to implement an action of this size and complexity. Operational capacity will be assessed on the basis of:

- Qualifications and relevant experience of the proposed team;
- Allocation of roles and responsibilities;
- Experience implementing comparable cultural development, capacity-building or multi-country programmes;
- Human, technical and organisational resources available for the action.

Applicants must provide: team profiles, description of roles and responsibilities, and reference list of up to five relevant projects. Additional documents may be requested.

For consortium applications, operational capacity is assessed across the consortium as a whole, considering responsibilities assigned to each member. The lead applicant remains fully responsible for programme design, coordination, quality assurance, financial management and compliance. Each consortium member must demonstrate sufficient capacity to perform its proposed role.

2.4 External Expertise and Delivery Support

Applicants may engage external trainers, facilitators, experts, universities, local organisations, training providers and other service providers where their expertise or contextual knowledge strengthens programme delivery.

At application stage, applicants should describe the types of external expertise and delivery support they expect to involve and identify confirmed contributors where available. The precise combination may be refined during the inception period based on the final programme design and participant needs.

External experts, trainers, universities, local organisations and service providers do not become Co-applicants or grant beneficiaries unless they are formally included as consortium members in the submitted application.

External providers engaged through procurement or other contractual arrangements are not entitled to represent the consortium or incur expenditure as grant beneficiaries. Their roles, selection approach and related costs must be clearly described and justified.

The single or Lead Applicant remains responsible for the quality, procurement, management and compliance of all externally provided services.

2.5 Who Cannot Apply?

The following may not participate as a single applicant, Lead Applicant or Co-applicant:

- Natural persons;
- Profit-making entities;
- Organisations that are not legally registered;
- Consortia of more than three organisations;
- Applicants or consortium members under the exclusion situations described in Section “Compliance and Exclusion Criteria”

2.6 Compliance and Exclusion Criteria

All information submitted in the application must be correct, complete and up to date. A single applicant or, in the case of a consortium, the lead applicant and each co-applicant must submit a signed Self-Declaration confirming compliance with the conditions for receiving EU funding.

The information may be verified, and additional documents may be requested before the grant contract is signed. Applicants and consortium members may not participate if they are subject to an EU exclusion decision or are in an exclusion situation

The exclusion criteria apply individually to the Lead Applicant and every Co-applicant. The ineligibility or exclusion of one consortium member may result in rejection of the entire application where the consortium no longer complies with the eligibility requirements.

TABLE 5- EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Exclusion Category	Examples
Insolvency	Bankruptcy, winding up, suspended business activity
Financial obligations	Unpaid tax or social-security obligations
Professional misconduct	Grave professional misconduct
Crime	Fraud, corruption, organised crime, money laundering, terrorism, child labour, human trafficking
Previous non-compliance	Serious failure to comply with obligations under previous EU contracts or grants
Irregularities	Irregularities affecting EU financial interests
Circumvention	Arrangements created to circumvent legal, fiscal or social obligations

Rejection grounds:

- Providing false or misleading information;
- Failing to provide required information;
- Involvement in preparing the call creating a conflict of interest or distortion of competition.

The full exclusion conditions are set out in the Self-Declaration form.

3 HOW TO SUBMIT AND PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

3.1 Filling and submission of the application form

Applications must be submitted through the [Goethe Application Portal \(GAP\)](#) before the application deadline. Applications submitted by email, post or through any other channel will not be evaluated.

In the case of a consortium, the lead applicant submits one application on behalf of all consortium members. Co-applicants do not submit separate applications. The lead applicant must ensure that all consortium members have reviewed and agreed to the application before submission.

Submission Process:

1. Register on GAP via the link provided on the Goethe-Institut website: [link](#);
2. Complete the Grant Application Form (Annex I), following the structure and guiding questions;
3. Attach all required supporting documents in PDF format (see Section 3.2);
4. Attach the Budget and Funding Plan (Annex II) in Excel format;
5. Review the completed application using the submission checklist;
Submit before the deadline.

After submission, an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent to the email address from which the application was submitted.

Language: Applications must be submitted in English. Supporting documents not originally in English must be accompanied by a translation of the relevant sections into English. Applications in other languages will not be evaluated.

Important: Applicants are strongly advised to begin preparing their application well in advance. Delays, transmission failures, or other technical issues arising close to the deadline will not be accepted as grounds for extension.

Submission deadline	5 October 2026, 18:00 CEST. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be evaluated under any circumstances.
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3.2 Required application documents

The following documents must be uploaded in GAP by the application deadline:

TABLE 6-LIST OF REQUIRED ANNEXES

Document	Format	Submitted by
Annex I – Grant Application Form (completed template)	PDF	A single applicant or, in case of a consortium, the Lead Applicant
Annex II – Budget Plan (completed template), <i>For consortium applications, Annex II must identify which consortium member will incur each cost, either in a dedicated column or in the justification for the relevant cost line.</i>	Excel	
Annex III – Logical Framework Matrix (completed template)	PDF	
Annex IV – Legal Entity Sheet(s) (completed and signed)	PDF	A single applicant or, in case of a consortium, the Lead Applicant and each co-applicant
Annex V – Financial Identification Form(s) (signed)	PDF	A single applicant or, in case of a consortium, the Lead Applicant
Annex VI – Self-Declaration Form(s) (completed and signed)	PDF	A single applicant or, in case of a consortium, the Lead Applicant and each co-applicant
Annex VII – Financial statements (Last Two Years)	PDF	A single applicant or, in case of a consortium, the Lead Applicant
CVs of core team members (max. 3 pages each)	PDF	Applicant and, where relevant, co-applicants
Consortium Mandate(s), signed by each Co-applicant	PDF	Each Co-applicant

All forms requiring a signature must be signed by the organisation's authorised representative. Incomplete applications or applications missing mandatory documents will not be evaluated.

Each Co-applicant must sign a mandate authorising the Lead Applicant to submit the application, represent the consortium and communicate with the Goethe-Institut in relation to the application and grant contract. The mandate does not remove the responsibility of a Co-applicant to comply with the obligations applicable to its activities and expenditure.

Multiple submissions and fraud

Where the same applicant submits more than one application, only the last application submitted before the deadline will be evaluated. Earlier versions will be disregarded.

Applications containing identical or substantially similar content submitted by different applicants may be subject to additional verification and may be rejected where fraud, collusion or misrepresentation is suspected.

Completeness and eligibility check

Following the submission deadline, all applications will undergo a formal completeness check. Applications that are incomplete – missing required documents or sections – will not be evaluated.

Applications missing mandatory substantive information or documents may be rejected. The Goethe-Institut may, at its discretion, request clarification or correction of a minor administrative omission only where this does not alter the substance of the application or provide an unfair advantage. Applicants are not entitled to make substantive changes after the deadline.

If the formal and eligibility criteria are not met, the application will be excluded from further evaluation. Applicants will be informed of the reason for exclusion in writing.

Information session

Following the launch of the call, EU4Culture II will organise an online information session for all potential applicants. The session will cover the call requirements, the application form, and the evaluation process. The session will be conducted in English, recorded, and made available on Goethe-Institut's website and on GAP for applicants who are unable to attend.

Individual consultations will not be provided. All questions received will be compiled and shared with all applicants in Q&A format to ensure equal access to information.

4 EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCEDURE

Applications will be evaluated in two stages:

1. formal and eligibility assessment; and
2. quality assessment.

Only applications that pass the formal and eligibility assessment will proceed to the quality assessment.

4.1 Stage 1 – Formal and Eligibility Assessment

The first stage is a pass/fail assessment. No scores are awarded at this stage.

Formal Assessment

The application must meet all of the following requirements:

- it was submitted through the Goethe Application Portal before the deadline;
- the correct application form and mandatory templates were used;
- all mandatory sections of the application form were completed;
- all required supporting documents were uploaded;
- the application was submitted in English;
- the requested grant amount and proposed implementation period comply with these Guidelines;
- the proposed activities are not financed through another European Union grant or other funding source.

An application that does not meet the formal requirements may be rejected without proceeding to the quality assessment.

Where a minor administrative omission can be corrected without changing the substance of the application or providing the applicant with an unfair advantage, the Goethe-Institut may request clarification or a missing document within a specified deadline. Applicants are not entitled to submit substantive changes to their proposal after the application deadline.

Eligibility Assessment

The eligibility assessment will verify that:

- the single applicant or Lead Applicant meets the eligibility requirements applicable to a single or Lead Applicant under Section 2.1;
- each Co-applicant meets the eligibility requirements applicable to Co-applicants under Section 2.1;
- the consortium composition complies with Section 2.2;
- the roles and contributions of consortium members are clearly defined;
- all required mandates, Legal Entity Sheets and Self-Declarations submitted;
- the applicant and all consortium members are not subject to the exclusion conditions;
- the proposed action serves the relevant EU4Culture II Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations;
- the proposed action falls within the scope of Standard Capacity Building.

Applications that do not pass the eligibility assessment will not proceed to the quality assessment.

4.2 Stage 2 – Quality Assessment

Applications that pass Stage 1 will be assessed by a Selection Committee against the award criteria set out below. The quality assessment will consider the information provided in the application form, the Budget and Funding Plan, the Logical Framework Matrix and all other required supporting documents.

Scoring scale

Each award criterion is assessed on a scale of 1 to 5:

Score	Meaning
5	Very good – the criterion is addressed in a comprehensive and convincing manner, with no significant weaknesses.
4	Good – the criterion is addressed well, with only minor weaknesses.

3	Adequate – the criterion is addressed adequately, but with notable gaps or weaknesses.
2	Poor – the criterion is addressed insufficiently, with significant weaknesses.
1	Very poor – the criterion is barely or not addressed.

Each rating is converted proportionally to the maximum score available for the criterion. The resulting criterion scores are added to produce the total score out of 100.

4.3 Award criteria

The table below sets out the six award criteria, the maximum score for each criterion, and the guiding questions that evaluators will use to assess each criterion.

Criterion	Guiding questions	Max.
1. Relevance	• Does the proposal demonstrate a clear understanding of Standard Capacity Building within EU4Culture II? • Are the proposed learning priorities aligned with the call objectives and approved thematic areas?	20
2. Programme design and methodology	• Do the three modular learning rounds form a coherent programme? • Does each round include a meaningful learning process rather than isolated activities? • Is the methodology practical, participatory and suited to adult professional learning? • Does the design support application, reflection and follow-up? • Is the balance between face-to-face and online elements appropriate? • Can the programme be refined during inception without fundamental redesign? • Are inclusion, accessibility, gender equality and environmental considerations integrated?	25
3. Effectiveness and Expected Results	• Are the proposed results clear, realistic and linked to the call objectives? • Are participant numbers, profiles and participation arrangements appropriate? • Are indicators, baselines and targets specific and measurable? • Is there a credible approach to assessing changes in participants' knowledge and capacities? • Will relevant knowledge and methods be shared and used within participating organisations? • Are the proposed learning materials and resources practical and proportionate?	20
4. Feasibility and Operational Capacity	• Is the implementation schedule realistic? • Does the applicant or consortium have relevant experience and sufficient operational capacity? • Are the proposed team, roles and responsibilities appropriate?	15

	• Are the delivery and logistical arrangements credible across the participating countries and communities? • Is the approach to selecting and managing external experts and providers realistic? • Are major risks identified with appropriate mitigation measures? • In case of consortium does each consortium member have sufficient capacity to perform its proposed role? • In case of consortium are the division of responsibilities, consortium coordination and decision-making arrangements clear and credible? •	
5. Sustainability and Transfer of Learning	• Is there a credible approach to sharing and using learning within participating organisations? • Will the proposed tools and materials remain useful after the activities end?	10
6. Budget and cost-effectiveness	• Are the costs necessary, realistic and clearly linked to the proposed activities? • Is the budget proportionate to the programme scope, participant numbers and expected results? • Are participant-support, expert and delivery costs adequately justified? • Is the budget internally consistent and sufficiently detailed? • Does the proposal provide good value for money?	10
Total	Applications must achieve an overall score of at least 60 points out of 100 to be considered for funding.	100

4.4 Notification and Contracting

All applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of the evaluation through the contact details provided in the application.

The successful applicant may be requested to submit additional documents or clarifications before the grant contract is signed.

The award decision does not create a legal entitlement to funding. Funding is confirmed only when the grant contract has been signed by the authorised parties.

The selected applicant must not begin activities or incur costs on the assumption that they will be funded before the eligibility date established in the grant contract.

5 TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES

TABLE 7 - TIMETABLE

The following timetable applies to this call		
Launch of the call	7 August 2026	
Online information session	8 September 2026	12:00 CEST <i>Please register for the online information session following the link</i>
Deadline for submission of written questions	10 September 2026	18:00 CEST
Publication of Q&A on Goethe-Institut website & GAP	16 September 2026	
Submission deadline	5 October 2026	18:00 CEST
Assessment of received applications	October 2026	
Notification of results to all applicants & Contracting process	October 2026	
Expected Start the implementation process	November 2026	Inception period (November 2026-January 2027)

6 PROMOTION OF HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

The proposed action must integrate, where relevant and proportionate, the following horizontal principles:

- gender equality and non-discrimination;
- environmental sustainability;
- equal opportunities, inclusion, accessibility and cultural diversity.

Applicants must explain how these principles are reflected in the programme design, participant selection, delivery, communication and monitoring. They should identify practical measures that will be applied at the operational level.

7 BUDGET AND FUNDING PLAN GUIDELINES

The Goethe-Institut is entrusted by the European Commission with the indirect management of EU funds in accordance with Article 62 in conjunction with Article 157 of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. In this capacity, the Goethe-Institut applies appropriate requirements and procedures when awarding EU funds to third parties, in order to ensure compliance with EU budgetary law, including the

principles of transparency, equal treatment, sound financial management, and effective and proportionate measures to prevent fraud and irregularities.

The grant awarded under this call is subject to the following principles, as set out in Article 191 of the Financial Regulation:

- ➔ **equal treatment** – all eligible applicants are assessed under the same conditions and against the same criteria;
- ➔ **transparency** – the award procedure is conducted in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner; awarding decisions are justified and documented;
- ➔ **co-financing** – co-financing of the action from other sources is not required under this call; however, applicants must declare all other sources of funding received or applied for in connection with the proposed activities;
- ➔ **non-cumulative award and no double financing** – EU4Culture II will not cover costs already funded by another European Union grant or other donor source for the same activities. Expenditures financed by another action or work programme of the European Union will not be eligible;
- ➔ **non-retroactivity** – grant beneficiaries may begin implementing their action only after the grant contract has been signed by both parties. Costs incurred prior to the date of signature of the grant contract will not be eligible;
- ➔ **no-profit** – the proposed action must not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the grant beneficiary within the framework of the project.

Grant amount and budget

One grant of up to EUR 500,000 is available under this Call. The final grant amount will be determined based on the approved application, Budget and Funding Plan, and contracting process.

Applicants are required to submit a Budget and Funding Plan (Annex II) as part of the application. The budget serves the following purposes:

- as an estimate of the total costs of the proposed action over the full project duration;
- as a basis for assessing cost efficiency, proportionality, and the justified allocation of costs to planned activities and expected outputs;
- as the upper limit for eligible costs, subject to approval by the Goethe-Institut.

The Budget and Funding Plan consists of three components:

- **Budget plan:** the applicant states the calculated project costs for the entire project duration, broken down into individual cost positions.
- **Justification of budget plan:** the applicant explains each cost position, its necessity, its relevance to the project, and justifies the calculation method used (unit cost × number of units). For example: for staff costs, the total employment cost and percentage of time dedicated to the project; for travel, the number of people, number of trips, mode of transport, and destinations.
- **Funding plan:** the applicant states all expected sources of funding, demonstrating that income from all sources covers the total calculated project costs.

Eligible costs

Only eligible costs will be covered by the grant. Eligible costs must be:

- Relevant and necessary for the action;
- Actually, incurred by the beneficiary;
- Incurred during the implementation period (contract signature to 31 July 2028);
- Explicitly stated in the approved budget;
- Identifiable and verifiable in accounting records;
- Compliant with applicable tax and social legislation;

- Appropriate, justified and in line with sound financial management.

Direct eligible costs - The following categories of direct costs are eligible under this call:

TABLE 8 - DIRECT ELIGIBLE COSTS

Cost category	Conditions and limits
Staff costs	Pre-tax wages, including social-security contributions and other remuneration-related costs, excluding performance-related bonuses. Salaries must not exceed the costs for which the beneficiary is normally responsible. Staff costs must remain proportionate to the overall action budget and be clearly justified in relation to the proposed activities, management needs and delivery model. Applicants should avoid disproportionately high staff costs unless these are clearly justified by the programme design.
Travel and accommodation	Travel and accommodation costs for project staff and other persons involved in the project.
Equipment	Purchase, depreciation, rental, or lease costs for equipment and accessories specifically dedicated to the purposes of the action. Purchased equipment must be inventoried and ownership must be transferred to the beneficiary at the latest upon submission of the final report. Equipment may not be used for other purposes or sold during the implementation period.
Costs of services	Costs of external expertise, consultancy, translation, design, digital services, production, quality assurance, and other services procured by the beneficiary for project purposes.
Office and administration costs	Lease expenses for a project office (where justified and described in the application), rental of event space and equipment, consumables, and other administration costs directly related to the project.
Other direct costs	Costs arising directly from contractual requirements, including dissemination, action-specific evaluation, translation, photocopying, insurance, financial services (including costs of money transfer and bank guarantees where required by contract), customs duties, taxes, and other charges not recoverable by the beneficiary.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are eligible costs that cannot be directly attributed to the implementation of the action but are incurred in connection with the eligible direct costs of the project. Indirect costs may not include any costs already shown under a direct cost position in the budget plan.

Indirect costs are funded at a flat rate of up to seven percent (7%) of the total incurred direct eligible costs. No supporting accounting documents are required for indirect costs.

Non-eligible costs

The following costs are not eligible under this call and may not be included in the budget plan or claimed in the financial report:

- Debts and debt service charges, including interest on loans;
- Provisions for losses, debts, or potential future liabilities;
- Costs already financed through another project or fund that includes a European Union grant (double funding);
- Currency exchange losses;
- Credits or loans to third parties, unless otherwise specified in the grant contract;
- Performance-related bonuses included in staff costs;
- Costs incurred before the date of signature of the grant contract (non-retroactivity);
- Costs that are excessive, unjustified, or not in line with the principle of sound financial management.

Procurement of goods and services

For any works, supplies, or services procured by the grant beneficiary within the scope of the action, the following procurement principles apply:

- Contracts must be awarded on a competitive basis. For contracts above the applicable threshold, the beneficiary must request quotes from at least three (3) different suppliers, or put contracts out to public tender in accordance with applicable public procurement rules.
- The beneficiary must accept the most economically advantageous offer and retain a traceable record of the entire award procedure, including all quotes received, the evaluation rationale, and the award decision.
- The procedure must comply with public procurement rules, as well as any relevant conditions imposed by the EU.
- Commercial discounts must be sought and applied wherever available.
- Conflicts of interest in the procurement process must be avoided at all times.

Goods acquired for the purposes of the action using grant funds must be used within the implementation period and within the scope of the grant purpose as defined in the grant contract. Acquired goods must be inventoried by the beneficiary and may not be used for other purposes or sold without prior written approval from the Goethe-Institut.

Double funding exclusion

Costs that are already covered by another source of funding are not eligible. Expenditures declared by the grant beneficiary under the proposed activities and financed by another action or work programme of the European Union, or by any other donor, will not be eligible.

To prevent the risk of double funding, the applicant must declare in the relevant section of the application form all sources and amounts of funding received or applied for in connection with the proposed activities, including other EU grants, national public funding, and private funding. The Goethe-

Institut reserves the right to verify declarations of funding sources and to exclude costs where double funding is identified.

8 REPORTING AND PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS¹

This section sets out the reporting and payment obligations of grant beneficiaries funded under this call. All templates referenced below will be provided by the Goethe-Institut at the contracting stage.

8.1 Narrative and Financial reports

The grant beneficiary must submit regular narrative and financial reports to the Goethe-Institut throughout the implementation period. An inception report must be submitted within three months of the start of implementation. The inception report will present the refined programme design, needs analysis, learning priorities, participant arrangements, delivery plan, monitoring framework and other operational details.

The final narrative and financial reports must be submitted within three months of the end of the implementation period. The reporting schedule is indicative and may be adjusted during contracting on the basis of the approved proposal.

Detailed reporting requirements and templates will be provided at the contracting stage.

TABLE 9 - NARRATIVE REPORT SCHEDULE

Report	Reporting period	Deadline for submission
Inception report	November 2026–January 2027	12 February 2027
Interim Narrative and Financial Report 1	November 2026–April 2027	15 April 2027
Interim Narrative and Financial Report 2	May 2027–January 2028	15 February 2028
Final Financial Report	February–July 2028	31 October 2028
Final Narrative Report	Whole implementation period	31 October 2028

8.2 Financial reports and payment arrangements

Payments under this call are made in instalments linked to reporting milestones. The table below sets out the indicative payment schedule. Exact amounts will be confirmed in the grant contract on the basis of the approved budget and activities. The payment conditions, including currency, tax treatment, VAT status, reimbursable costs, and supporting documentation, will be specified in the grant contract.

¹ The reporting scheme, the timeline and payment arrangements are indicative and might be updated during the contracting stage, based on the received proposal.

TABLE 10 - FINANCIAL REPORT SCHEDULE AND INSTALMENTS

Instalment	Reporting period covered	Report deadline	% of grant	indicative timing
1st instalment – pre-financing	-	-	30%	Within 30 days of contract signature.
2nd instalment	November 2026 – April 2027	15 April 2027	40%	Approval of Interim Financial Report 1.
3rd instalment	May 2027– January 2028	15 February 2028	20%	Approval of Interim Financial Report 2.
4th instalment – Final payment	February–July 2028	31 October 2028	Up to 10%	Following approval of the Final Financial Report and within the period specified in the grant contract

The final payment will represent the balance of the approved grant, up to 10%, calculated on the basis of eligible expenditure accepted by the Goethe-Institut. Where the total accepted eligible expenditure is lower than the approved budget, the final payment may be reduced accordingly, and any unused or ineligible amounts may be recovered.

All payments will be made in euros. Where eligible expenditure is incurred in another currency, it must be converted into euros using the method specified in the grant contract. Currency-exchange losses are not eligible costs and may not be included in the financial reports.

8.3 Financial management

Beneficiaries must maintain a transparent and auditable record of all project-related income and expenditure throughout the implementation period. The following requirements apply:

- **Accounting:** all project expenditure must be recorded in a dedicated project cost centre or equivalent accounting structure that allows project costs to be clearly separated from the beneficiary's other organisational costs.
- **Supporting documents:** original invoices, contracts, payroll records, attendance sheets, travel documentation, and bank statements must be retained for a minimum of ten years after the end of the project and made available to the Goethe-Institut or its authorised auditors on request.
- **Budget transfers:** transfers of up to 25% between approved cost categories may be made without a formal contract amendment, provided the primary objective of the project is not affected. The 25% threshold is assessed cumulatively across the full implementation period. Transfers exceeding 25% require a written addendum to the grant contract approved by the Goethe-Institut.
- **Bank accounts:** all project funds must be held in a dedicated or clearly identifiable bank account. Any change to bank details must be communicated in writing to the Goethe-Institut

immediately and is subject to a mandatory verification process before the next payment is released.

8.4 Audit and verification of expenditure

The Goethe-Institut is responsible for verifying that all funds awarded under this call are used in accordance with the grant contract. For grants of EUR 100,000 or more, expenditure will be verified by an external auditor appointed by the Goethe-Institut. The cost is borne by the Goethe-Institut and must not be included in the Budget and Funding Plan.

Verification of expenditure includes a review of invoices, contracts, payroll records, and bank statements against reported costs, as well as random-sample checks of expenditure documentation. At the start of each audit, the beneficiary will be informed in writing of the scope and timing of the verification. Findings will be communicated to the beneficiary, who will have a reasonable opportunity to respond before any recovery decision is taken.

The Goethe-Institut reserves the right to conduct on-site or remote project visits at any point during the implementation period. Beneficiaries are required to cooperate fully with any audit or monitoring exercise and to provide access to all relevant documentation on request. All project documentation must be retained for a minimum of ten (10) years after the end of the implementation period.

9 VISIBILITY RULES

The grant beneficiary must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications, communication materials and activities financed under the grant. The name and logo of the European Union must be displayed on publications, learning materials, posters, programmes, online content and other products produced under the action.

Detailed visibility requirements, templates and guidance will be provided after the grant contract is signed.

10 PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

Personal data submitted as part of the application will be processed only for purposes related to the management, evaluation, contracting, implementation, reporting and audit of this call and the resulting grant.

Personal data will be processed in accordance with the applicable data-protection rules of the Goethe-Institut and the European Union, including Regulation (EU) 2016/679—the General Data Protection Regulation – where applicable.

Applicants will confirm the relevant data-protection declaration in the Goethe Application Portal during submission.

11 CONTACT INFORMATION

For enquiries regarding this call, please contact: **EU4Culture II – Programme Coordination Office**
eu4culture@goethe.de

12 ANNEXES

12.1 Documents to be completed and uploaded

- Annex I:** Grant application form
- Annex II:** Budget and Funding Plan (Excel format)
- Annex III:** Logical Framework Matrix
- Annex IV:** Legal entity sheet (s)
- Annex V:** Financial identification form (s)
- Annex VI:** Self-declaration form (s)
- Annex VII:** Financial statements

12.2 Documents for information

- Annex A:** Overview of the Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations activities
- Annex B:** Grant Contract template
- Annex C:** Budget and funding plan guidelines
- Annex D:** Updated Budget and Financial Plan
- Annex E:** Financial report template
- Annex F:** Narrative report template

Annexes A-F are provided for information only and must not be submitted with the application. Annexes B and D-F are templates and may be updated during contracting.

Disclaimer

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