

EU4CULTURE II – SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

Restricted Call for Proposals: Supporting the Internationalisation Component

Questions and Answers

IMPORTANT – THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE HAS BEEN EXTENDED. Proposals must be submitted by 5 October 2026, 18:00 CEST. The previous deadline of 18 September 2026 no longer applies.

This document compiles the written questions received by the deadline of 31 July 2026 and the answers of the Goethe-Institut. It is published on the Goethe-Institut website and on the Goethe Application Portal (GAP) and is made available to all applicants equally. In accordance with Section 3.2 of the guidelines, individual consultations are not provided.

The answers are given for information and guidance only. Where an answer states that a call document is corrected, the correction is made by corrigendum published alongside this document; in all other respects, the Grant Application Guidelines and their annexes prevail.

I. Scope and content

Sectoral focus

Q1. The Georgian sectoral focus is listed as “cross-sectoral” in Annex A but as “to be confirmed” in the guidelines for the call. What is the status at this point? Will this sectoral focus be confirmed before the submission deadline? Or should proposals be designed on the basis of a cross-sectoral scope for the full duration of the action?

A1. *The Living Lab and Intermediary Organisation arrangements for Georgia follow a different implementation timeline from the other countries and contexts of the programme, and the sectoral focus will be confirmed after the submission deadline. Applicants to this call are therefore invited to submit a general framework concept adopting a cross-sectoral approach for Georgia. The concept will be further refined and specified during the inception phase.*

As the sectoral focus for Georgia has not yet been confirmed, proposals will not be disadvantaged on this basis. The assessment of Criterion 1 will take into account the information available at the time of submission.

Q2. “Contemporary art” is listed among the sectors for Azerbaijan in Annex A. However, it is not a sector in the strict sense of the term, since it refers to art created from the late 20th century to the present by living artists. The same applies to “creative innovation”, which no standard classification considers a sector but rather an approach. What exactly do these two terms encompass?

A2. *The terms are used in the programme as descriptors of the ecosystem focus agreed at country level, not as categories drawn from a formal statistical classification of the cultural and creative sectors.*

“Contemporary art” refers to the visual arts field as it currently operates – practising artists, independent art spaces, galleries, curators, art education initiatives, and related production and presentation infrastructure.

“Creative innovation” refers to work at the intersection of the cultural and creative sectors and other domains – design, digital technologies, creative entrepreneurship – rather than to a distinct sector. It is included to signal that cross-sectoral proposals are welcome where they respond to identified ecosystem needs.

Applicants are not expected to align their proposals with a formal sector classification. What matters for the assessment is that the proposed activities respond to the needs of the actors present in the focus area concerned, as set out in Annex A.

Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations

Q3. Annex A (Overview of the Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations) states in its Quick Guide that a maximum of 24 Intermediary Organisations will be supported under the programme, with up to four selected per country. The country table in the same document (“IOs to be selected (Stage 1)”) nevertheless indicates one Intermediary Organisation for Azerbaijan, which brings the maximum total to 21. Could you confirm the maximum number of Intermediary Organisations to be selected under Stage 1, and clarify which of these two figures should be used as the basis for sizing activities and quantitative targets in the proposal?

A3. Under EU4Culture II, a maximum of 24 Intermediary Organisations will be supported. Applicants to this restricted call should therefore use the figure of 24 as the basis for planning their proposed activities and defining their quantitative targets.

The distribution of Intermediary Organisations across the participating countries is indicative and may be adjusted at a later stage of the programme's implementation.

Close coordination and communication between the Contracting Authority and the selected beneficiary shall be maintained throughout the implementation to ensure that the workplan and target values can be aligned with the cohort of Intermediary Organisations selected for EU4Culture II support.

Q4. Will the Goethe-Institut provide a template or a prescribed structure for the roadmap and the value proposition in Stage 1?

A4. Creative Ecosystem Development Roadmaps and Value Propositions will be developed by the Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations themselves during Stage 1, supported by the mentorship provided under the programme. The structure of both documents will be elaborated during Stage 1.

Applicants to this call are not responsible for preparing these documents. Applicants are expected to engage actively in the process and to explain in their proposal how their proposed internationalisation activities will contribute to, align with and be embedded in the Roadmaps of the Living Labs and the Value Propositions of the Intermediary Organisations.

Type of activities

Q5. During the information session, we learned that peer-learning sessions will be organised by the Goethe-Institut in EU member states or in Eastern Partnership countries, as part of two calls for applications launched during the programme's implementation period (7 to 8 participants from each country to be selected). Is this information correct? And is it possible to get more details about these activities and how their complementarity with the other components is envisaged?

A5. Yes – approximately 8 participants per country will be selected, up to a maximum of 50 participants in total (for both calls). Peer-to-Peer Learning is a programme activity organised directly by the Goethe-Institut, separately from this call. It is a reciprocal exchange in which organisations learn from one another – sharing tools, approaches and management models adaptable to their own contexts – positioning EaP cultural and creative actors as equal contributors of knowledge rather than only as beneficiaries.

It runs in two stages: EaP-EaP exchanges, strengthening regional cooperation; and EaP-EU exchanges, deepening integration into European organisations in the relevant sectors. Participants are selected through two open calls addressed to Living Lab members and Intermediary Organisations, with mentor-supported matchmaking by thematic focus, complementary skills and geographic diversity. Exchanges are short and intensive – 3 to 7 days onsite, excluding travel – with online preparation and feedback, and may be physical, online or hybrid.

These activities are complementary to the action funded under this call and must not be duplicated by it.

II. Articulation and complementarity with the EU4Culture II programme

Knowledge management

Q6. Could you clarify how the knowledge, data and stakeholder mapping generated through the programme will be shared with the selected beneficiary? Will the beneficiary have access to the findings, datasets, contact databases, assessments and other outputs already produced by EU4Culture II (including Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations), and if so, at what stage and through which mechanisms?

A6. Yes. The selected beneficiary will be given access to the relevant non-personal outputs already produced under EU4Culture II, to the extent that they are available at the time. These include the Inception Phase research findings and the ecosystem mappings and needs assessments prepared by the Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations as part of their proposals under the open calls.

Access to the documentation can only be granted after the signature of the grant contract by both parties. The relevant materials will be provided to the beneficiary during the inception period. The inception report serves as a needs analysis and as the basis for concrete planning of the activities, which is why the inception period must be incorporated into the implementation timeline.

Personal data, including individual contact details, cannot be transferred automatically. Where contact with individuals or organisations is required, this will be arranged in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 – normally by the Goethe-Institut facilitating the introduction or seeking consent, rather than by transferring contact databases.

Q7. “Cultural Impact Assessment” is listed among the programme’s key priorities on the EU4Culture II webpage, even though this component does not exist as such in the Commission’s action document. Does this term refer to a cross-cutting component managed centrally by the Goethe-Institut (measuring the impact of culture, improving data collection as a continuation of the first phase’s Baseline Report, and training local experts on cultural indicators)? Are the consortia for the two components expected to contribute to this, and if so, in what way?

A7. Impact assessment is a key component of the EU4Culture II programme.

It goes beyond monitoring the predefined indicators set out in the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) and includes a dedicated approach to tracking broader societal change resulting from programme interventions, including internationalisation. In addition, the support provided to Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations is based on an iterative process of assessment, learning and refinement. These measures are implemented at programme level and independently of the specific scope of this call.

The successful applicant under this call is expected to:

- *Monitor and report results in line with the LFM and the programme’s monitoring framework, on the basis of its own monitoring framework proposed in the application;*
- *Assess and document changes among the target groups with regard to internationalisation processes and outcomes, and reflect these findings in its reporting;*
- *Cooperate closely with programme-level impact assessment activities, including by providing monitoring data, relevant analyses, documentation and other necessary information to the EU4Culture II team and any external evaluators.*

Therefore, while the impact assessment component is coordinated at programme level, the successful applicant is expected to contribute through its monitoring, reporting, data provision and cooperation within the relevant assessment and evaluation processes.

Articulation with the Capacity-Building component

Q8. The coordination of activities and timelines between the two components appears essential to achieving the programme’s objectives. However, we understand that the content and calendar of

the Capacity-Building component will only be known in autumn 2026 at the earliest – that is, at or after the start of the Internationalisation Component. What coordination mechanism does the Goethe-Institut foresee between the two components?

A8. *The two components are complementary and are coordinated by the Goethe-Institut as the Contracting Authority for both actions. The inception period and the Inception Report are the primary mechanism for aligning the two workplans. By the end of the inception period, the content and schedule of the capacity-building activities will be finalised, enabling the internationalisation workplan to be adjusted accordingly, in coordination with and subject to approval by the Goethe-Institut.*

In addition, regular coordination meetings between the Goethe-Institut, the beneficiary responsible for the internationalisation component and the beneficiary responsible for the capacity-building component will be held throughout the implementation period, to ensure effective coordination and complementarity.

Applicants should therefore build a degree of flexibility into their activity planning for the first year and describe, under “Complementarity and Synergies” in Annex I, how they would adapt the sequencing of activities once the capacity-building schedule is finalised. It should also be noted that budget reallocations of up to 25% between approved budget headings may be made without a contract amendment, providing additional flexibility during the implementation period.

III. Articulation and continuity with the EU4Culture I programme

Q9. The “EU4Culture Project Overview” reports, among the capacity-building results, that 500 stakeholders from non-capital cities participated in capacity-building activities, and that 87 cultural professionals from Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine participated in training on internationalisation, as well as the organisation of a grant proposal training. Could you specify the nature of these trainings on internationalisation: were they online? Did they have a regional dimension? What was the profile of the trainers? Is it known how many of the trained professionals submitted a project under Creative Europe in 2026?

A9. *The internationalisation trainings delivered under the first phase of EU4Culture were held in person and organised at national level. The trainers were engaged by one of the consortium members of the first phase. Materials from these trainings are not available to the selected beneficiary.*

The programme does not systematically monitor subsequent applications by participants to Creative Europe, and therefore no verified figure is available. The present call places emphasis on a results framework with baselines and target values, and on durable follow-up structures such as alumni networks.

Q10. Local and regional authorities are not explicitly mentioned in the call as partners or key interlocutors of the internationalisation component. Given the central role they were given in the first phase of the programme, are there any expectations regarding their involvement?

A10. *Local and regional authorities are not eligible applicants under this call and are not target beneficiaries of the internationalisation component, whose primary beneficiaries are the members of the Living Labs and the Intermediary Organisations. The eligibility conditions applying to Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations and their members are set out in the guidelines for the Calls for Proposals supporting Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations, available both on the Goethe-Institut website and on GAP.*

At the same time, local and regional authorities are important and relevant ecosystem stakeholders. Living Labs are multi-stakeholder platforms bringing together public, private, civil society and academic actors, and the Creative Ecosystem Development Roadmaps are developed with their involvement. Proposals may therefore engage local and regional authorities as stakeholders where this is justified – for example in strategic internationalisation planning, in policy-facing visibility

activities, or in embedding internationalisation into local strategies. Activities must in all cases clearly demonstrate how they contribute to the Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations.

Q11. During the first phase, a EU4Culture Cities Network was established as a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration. Even though the geographic scope covered by the second phase is not exactly the same, is the consortium expected to establish contact with this network of cities?

A11. The EU4Culture Cities Network established under the first phase is no longer active as a formal structure. Engagement with this network is not a requirement of this call, and proposals are not expected to aim at its continuation.

Where a proposal foresees engagement with individual cities that participated in the network, this should be justified by reference to the geographic focus areas of the current phase and to the needs identified through the Creative Ecosystem Development Roadmaps, rather than presented as continuity in itself. The Goethe-Institut may facilitate relevant introductions during the inception period, if appropriate.

Q12. The call encourages mobilising EU4Culture I alumni. How do these alumni continue to function? Will their contact details be accessible to the beneficiary in compliance with the GDPR, and through which channel?

A12. Alumni engagement under this call refers primarily to building follow-up structures for participants in the activities funded by the action itself, as set out in Section 1.6 of the guidelines. Applicants should design their alumni activities around the target group of EU4Culture II rather than around participants in the previous phase.

Contact details of participants in earlier programme activities constitute personal data and cannot be transferred to a grant beneficiary without a lawful basis under Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Where a proposal nevertheless foresees reaching them, this will be arranged by the Goethe-Institut circulating information on the beneficiary's behalf, or by seeking the individuals' consent.

IV. Administration, budget and financial rules

Q13. Regarding the budget, how are applicants supposed to distinguish, in the columns, between costs associated with the lead applicant and those associated with the co-applicant?

A13. Each budget line in the Budget and Funding Plan (Annex II) must clearly indicate which organisation within the consortium will incur the respective cost. This may be done either by adding a column to the budget table identifying the implementing organisation for each budget line, or by providing this information in a separate worksheet containing the justification for each budget item.

The budget narrative justification, and the corresponding section of the Grant Application Form, should explain the distribution of resources across the consortium and demonstrate how this allocation reflects the logic of the proposed activities.

Q14. Regarding the financial statements (Annex VII): are internal financial statements in the applicant's own language acceptable, or is the data required to be transferred into a specific template provided by the Goethe-Institut?

A14. Financial statements may be submitted in their original form as produced under the applicant's national accounting framework; no Goethe-Institut template is prescribed for Annex VII.

Where the statements are not in English, they must be accompanied by a translation of the relevant sections into English, in line with the language requirement in Section 3.1 of the guidelines. A full certified translation is not required; a translation of the main statements and of the sections needed to verify the figures is sufficient.

Annex VII should be submitted in PDF and should cover the last two closed financial years.

Q15. An external audit is mandatory for grants above EUR 100,000. Where an applicant operates under a statutory public accounting regime with a State-appointed public accountant who is legally and functionally independent of the institution's management, and who performs audit and expenditure verification functions comparable to those of an external auditor, could that officer be recognised as the auditor for the purposes of this contract, thereby avoiding the need to procure an additional external audit service?

A15. Under Section 8.4 of the guidelines, expenditure verification for grants of EUR 100,000 or more is carried out by an external auditor appointed by the Goethe-Institut. The verification is therefore commissioned by the Contracting Authority and is not part of the beneficiary's own audit or statutory control arrangements.

A statutory public accountant or a similar function within the beneficiary's national control framework, even where legally and functionally independent from the institution's management, cannot automatically replace the external auditor required under the contract. The requirement relates not only to the independence of the person performing the verification, but also to the independence of the appointment, the contractual relationship, and the purpose of the verification as an assurance mechanism for the Contracting Authority.

Unless explicitly accepted by the Goethe-Institut in accordance with the contractual framework, beneficiaries should therefore not assume that an internal or statutory audit function may be used as a substitute for the external verification foreseen under the guidelines.

Applicants should not include the cost of the external verification in the budget plan. The cost is borne by the Contracting Authority, and the verification will be performed by the auditor appointed by the Goethe-Institut.

Q16. The call encourages allocating around 40% of the total amount to activities implemented by the co-applicant or directly serving it. Is this an indicative benchmark or a requirement? How is the notion of an activity "directly serving" the co-applicant assessed? Do the expenses need to be managed directly by the co-applicant?

A16. The figure is an indicative benchmark, not an eligibility threshold. Sections 1.4 and 7 of the guidelines state that applicants are encouraged to allocate a substantial share, giving approximately 40% as an illustration. A proposal will not be rejected at the eligibility stage for departing from it.

It is, however, assessed under Criterion 3 (Consortium composition and partnership quality) and Criterion 7 (Budget and cost-effectiveness). A budget in which the co-applicant's share is not commensurate with its role will score poorly on the question of whether roles are clearly defined, proportionate and justified. Conversely, a share substantially above or below 40% is acceptable where the distribution of activities justifies it and the justification is given in Annex I and Annex II.

On the meaning of the allocation: what is assessed is the share of the budget covering activities for which the co-applicant is responsible – that is, costs incurred and accounted for by the co-applicant as a co-beneficiary of the grant.

V. Expected results

Q17. The call states that at least 24 organisations from EaP countries will become members of Creative Europe Networks or other European cultural platforms. Does this figure genuinely constitute a minimum, given that the guiding questions under "Effectiveness and expected results" cite, as an example, "20 organisations become members of networks"?

A17. Yes. The expected results in Section 1.3 – at least 24 organisations gaining membership of Creative Europe Networks or other European cultural platforms, and at least 24 sustainable international collaborations – are the programme-level targets for this component.

The reference to “20 organisations become members of networks” in the guiding questions under Criterion 4 is an illustration of how an indicator should be formulated, contrasting a specific, measurable statement with a vague one such as “improved contacts”. It is not a target value.

Q18. Can these results and the associated indicators be adapted? The number of memberships in European cultural networks is not the only measure of internationalisation.

A18. *The expected results set out in Section 1.3 are fixed at programme level and proposals are expected to contribute to them. The target values also form part of the programme’s logical framework matrix and must be met.*

Applicants are, however, expected to propose their own results framework with indicators, baselines and target values (Criterion 4 and the corresponding section of the Grant Application Form), and may add complementary qualitative and quantitative indicators capturing dimensions of internationalisation that membership figures do not measure – for example the number of formal cooperation agreements concluded, co-productions or joint applications developed, participation in international events leading to follow-up, internationalisation strategies embedded in roadmaps and value propositions, the continuation of collaborations after the action ends, or participants’ perception of change.

Q19. Should the targets of at least 24 units be calculated against the cohort selected under Stage 1, or against the cohort actually awarded funding under Stage 2? In addition, do these targets apply to the managing organisations (Living Lab managers and Intermediary Organisations), or to the members of the Living Labs, given that the latter are designated as primary beneficiaries of the component?

A19. *The targets are counted against the cohort selected under Stage 1, which is the cohort the internationalisation component is designed to serve. The confirmed list of Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations will be made available to the selected beneficiary at the inception stage, after the signature of the grant contract.*

The targets apply at the level of the beneficiary organisations of the component – that is, the members of the Living Labs and the Intermediary Organisations themselves. Living Lab managing organisations may be counted where they gain membership in their own right, but a proposal that delivers its targets only through managing organisations, without reaching Living Lab members, will not be considered to have addressed the primary beneficiary group and will be scored accordingly under Criteria 1 and 4.

Since the exact size and composition of the cohort will be confirmed after the submission deadline, applicants should state the assumptions on which their target values are based. Target values may be refined in the inception report.

Q20. Could you confirm that memberships in established European cultural networks and platforms that are not funded under the Creative Europe programme count fully towards this result indicator, provided the membership is justified by the beneficiary’s Roadmap or Value Proposition? If so, does a membership obtained through an intermediary structure – for example an organisation joining a European federation whose members are national-level associations – also qualify, or must the membership be held directly in the name of the beneficiary organisation?

A20. *Yes. Section 1.2 of the guidelines states that engagement with other established European cultural networks is eligible where justified, and Section 1.3 refers to Creative Europe Networks or other European cultural platforms. Membership of an established European sectoral network that is not funded under Creative Europe counts fully towards the expected result, provided the applicant demonstrates the added value for the CCS actors concerned and the membership is justified by the relevant Creative Ecosystem Development Roadmap or Value Proposition.*

As regards indirect membership: the expected result concerns organisations from the Eastern Partnership becoming members of European networks. Membership held in the name of the beneficiary organisation itself – including associate, observer or equivalent categories, where the

network's statutes provide for them – counts towards the indicator. Where a network admits only national-level associations, participation obtained through an intermediary structure counts only where the beneficiary organisation acquires an identifiable membership status and the associated rights of participation in its own name. Access mediated by another organisation, without any membership status attaching to the beneficiary, does not count towards this indicator, although it may be reported as a partnership or collaboration under the second expected result.

VI. Communication, visibility and advocacy

Q21. Given the importance placed on visibility and advocacy, what types of communication actions are expected? Is this sector-specific, professional communication rather than communication aimed at the general public?

A21. Applicants are expected to propose communication, dissemination and visibility actions that are proportionate to the proposed action and clearly contribute to its internationalisation objectives. The main emphasis is on targeted professional and sector-specific communication. The objective is to increase the visibility, international presence and recognition of Eastern Partnership cultural and creative actors among European audiences: cultural networks, platforms, policy discussions and professional communities.

Applicants should identify the relevant audiences, the appropriate formats and channels, an indicative number of outputs or actions, and the intended reach or result of each communication activity.

Expected activities include presenting the work of Living Labs and Intermediary Organisations to European professional audiences; multilingual materials such as case studies and newsletters introducing EaP cultural scenes and value proposition results to potential partners; online networking events, webinars and digital showcases; participation in European policy forums and advocacy platforms; and the dissemination of methodologies and lessons learned to wider CCS ecosystems in the EaP countries.

The Grant Application Form asks applicants to distinguish clearly between communication of activities and dissemination of results. General-public communication is not excluded where it serves a defined purpose, but it should not replace targeted professional communication, and a proposal built mainly around general-audience outreach would not respond to the objectives of this call. This is separate from the obligation to acknowledge EU funding under Section 9 of the guidelines, which applies to all outputs.

Q22. Is it possible to create a page dedicated to the internationalisation component on the lead applicant's or co-applicant's website, or should all communication materials be compiled on the Goethe-Institut webpage dedicated to the programme as a whole?

A22. Beneficiaries may host a dedicated page for the action on the lead applicant's or a co-applicant's existing website, and are encouraged to do so provided that its purpose, target audience, content and expected reach are clearly explained in the application.

Two conditions apply. First, all such content must comply with the visibility rules in Section 9 of the guidelines: the EU contribution must be clearly acknowledged and the EU logo used, with detailed visual requirements and templates provided after signature of the grant contract. Second, the action is part of the EU4Culture II programme and must be presented as such, rather than as a standalone initiative of the beneficiary; applicants should avoid presenting such a page as a separate official EU4Culture II programme website.

This does not replace the Goethe-Institut programme pages. Content should be coordinated with the Goethe-Institut communications team and shared for publication on the programme website, so that outputs remain accessible in one place. Detailed branding, approval and coordination procedures will be communicated following the signature of the grant contract, and communication planning is agreed during the inception period.

Q23. Does the EU4Culture programme plan, in its final phase, a visibility moment in Brussels on which it would be possible to build? If so, would it be possible to obtain more precise information about this event (programme, objectives, tentative date)?

A23. *A final visibility event in Brussels is foreseen during the final phase of the EU4Culture programme. However, the objectives, format, programme and exact timing of the event will be defined in coordination with the Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST) at a later stage.*

Applicants should therefore not design activities or budget lines that depend exclusively on participation in this event. Where relevant, proposals may foresee potential contributions to, or synergies with, a final visibility moment in Brussels, while maintaining sufficient flexibility. The details of the event, including possible forms of participation, will be developed in coordination with the selected beneficiary during the implementation period, including the inception phase.

Q24. Is a final event planned in the EaP region to showcase the programme's results?

A24. *A final regional event is not foreseen at this stage. Applicants should not include a provision for such an event in their activity plan or budget. Should one be organised during the implementation period, the beneficiary will be involved and the workplan adjusted accordingly.*