

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

SUPPORTING ESTABLISHMENT OF CREATIVE PLATFORMS - LIVING LABS

Open Call for Proposals (Stage 1) Within EU4Culture II Programme

UKRAINE

Open Call Period: 18 June 2026 – 20 July 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Quick Guide (Stage 1)	2
1. About EU4Culture II	3
2. About the Call for Proposals.....	3
2.1. Objectives and Structure	3
2.2. Geographic and Sectoral Scope	5
2.3. Key Concepts and Methodology.....	5
2.4. Examples of Eligible Activities (Stage 1).....	6
2.5. Members and Stakeholders of the Living Lab	7
2.6. Additional Support.....	8
3. Financial Allocation Provided by EU4Culture II	8
4. Eligibility Criteria	9
4.1. Eligibility of Applicants.....	9
4.2. General Conditions	9
4.3. Operational Capacity and Exclusion	9
5. Application Process	11
5.1. How to Apply?	11
5.2. Submission Deadline.....	11
5.3. Required Application Documents.....	11
5.4. Information Session for Potential Applicants	12
6. Indicative Timeline (Stage 1).....	12
7. Evaluation of Submitted Applications	13
7.1. Formal and Eligibility Assessment	13
7.2. Quality Assessment	13
7.3. Award Criteria.....	14
7.4. Strong vs Weak Applications - Do's and Don'ts (Applicant Guidance)	15
7.5. Conflict of Interest.....	16
8. Notification of Results and Contracting	16
9. Budget and Funding	16
10. Grant Payout Scheme.....	18
11. Reporting	18
12. Promotion of Horizontal Principles.....	19
13. Visibility	19
14. Personal Data Protection.....	19
15. Important Information.....	20
16. Contact Information.....	20
Definition of Terms	21

QUICK GUIDE (STAGE 1)

SUPPORTING ESTABLISHMENT OF LIVING LABS

TWO-STAGE GRANT SCHEME

→ PURPOSE OF THE CALL

Strengthening local creative ecosystems through enhanced cooperation, co-creation, and strategic planning.

→ WHAT WILL BE SUPPORTED

- ☑ Establishment of Creative Platform - **Living Lab** in **Lviv** and **Ivano-Frankivsk** regions
- ☑ Co-creation of Creative Ecosystem Roadmap with priority focus on the sectors of audiovisual, digital, performing arts, music, design, creative innovation

→ WHO CAN APPLY

- ☑ Ukrainian Cultural and Creative organisations active in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions, located in government-controlled areas of Ukraine.

→ FUNDING

- ☑ Up to EUR 9,500

→ ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- ☑ The grant beneficiaries will also receive support in capacity-building and internationalisation opportunities

→ HOW TO APPLY

- ☑ Apply via the Goethe Application Portal (GAP)
- ☑ Submit the application in English before the deadline

→ KEY DATES

- ☑ Call opens: 18 June 2026
- ☑ Information session: 8 July 2026
- ☑ **Deadline: 20 July 2026, 23:59 CEST**
- ☑ Implementation (Stage 1): October 2026 - February 2027

→ WHAT COMES NEXT (STAGE 2)

- ☑ Upon successful completion of Stage 1 the grant beneficiaries will be invited to Stage 2 to implement roadmap solutions (funding up to EUR 60,000)

→ QUESTIONS & SUPPORT

- ☑ Questions can be sent to: eu4culture@goethe.de - before **9 July 2026**, 23.59 CEST

This quick guide is intended as a supplementary tool only. applicants must carefully read and fully understand the official application guidelines before applying.

1. ABOUT EU4CULTURE II

EU4Culture II - Sustainable Creative Ecosystems is the regional programme fully funded by the European Union and implemented by the Goethe-Institut from 2025 to 2029.

EU4Culture II - strengthens the role of culture as a driver for economic growth, social development and resilience across the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarusian Cultural and Creative Sector in exile).

The programme promotes sustainable creative ecosystems, empowers cultural and creative sectors (CCS), and deepens cooperation with European networks through targeted support, professional development and international cooperation.

EU4Culture II supports cultural and creative actors, it further engages with policymakers, businesses and civil society to integrate CCS into broader economic and social development strategies.

EU4Culture II supports:

- Establishment of creative platforms – **Living Labs**, to co-create and implement roadmaps for the development of local creative ecosystems.
- **Cultural Intermediary Organisations** to strengthen their role as advocates and facilitators of creative ecosystems. Intermediary organisations will extend their activities to the regions, including those where the platforms will be established, allowing for potential synergies with the platforms.
- **Mentorship** and **capacity-building** for the Living Labs and intermediary organisations.
- **International networking** and **peer-to-peer exchanges**

2. ABOUT THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1. Objectives and Structure

The **objective** of the call is to strengthen sustainable and resilient creative ecosystems by promoting sectoral and cross-sector cooperation, building capacities, raising awareness of the value of cultural and creative sectors, improving strategic planning, and enhancing community ownership.

This Call for Proposals is an **Open Call** for **Stage 1** in the framework of the **two-stage grant** scheme.

The call is open for eligible legal entities registered and based in Ukraine active in the cultural and creative sectors in **Lviv** and **Ivano-Frankivsk** regions, located in government-controlled areas of Ukraine. (cf. Chapter 4).

Selected organisations will receive **up to EUR 9,500** within Stage 1 to:

- ➔ Establish creative platforms, hereinafter referred to as “**Living Labs**,” in **Lviv** and **Ivano-Frankivsk** regions (one Living Lab per region).
- ➔ **Co-create roadmaps** for local creative ecosystem, with a priority focus on audiovisual, digital, performing arts, music, design, creative innovation sectors.
- ➔ Selected organisations in Stage 1 will:
 - bring together relevant local stakeholders;
 - apply participatory and co-creation approaches;
 - analyse local ecosystem needs and opportunities;
 - jointly develop a creative ecosystem roadmap.

After successful completion of Stage 1, grant beneficiaries will be invited to participate in the **restricted Call for Proposals (Stage 2)**, which will provide funding up to EUR 60,000 for the implementation and testing of roadmap-based models, evaluation of results and refinement of the roadmap. Stage 2 funding will depend on the quality of performance in Stage 1 and the quality of the application submitted within the restricted call.

Table 1: Structure of the Grant Scheme

Stage 1 - Open Call for Proposals - Current Call <i>Establishment of the Living Lab, Roadmap co-creation</i>
<p>Eligible applicants are invited to submit proposals. Selected applicants will receive support of up to EUR 9,500 each to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish creative platforms - Living Labs ▪ Co-design creative ecosystem roadmaps <p><u>Stage 1 - Expected Results</u></p> <p>For successful completion of Stage 1 - the grant beneficiary must accomplish following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Living Lab established and operational in the designated focus area, including a clearly defined mandate, scope, and governance model, as well as a functional operational framework, management structures, and main processes. ▪ Inclusive co-creation mechanisms and collaboration models are established ▪ Creative ecosystem roadmap created, including a detailed action plan, monitoring framework and sustainability plan. <p><u>Indicative Timeline:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open Call: June - July 2026 ▪ Implementation and reporting: October - March 2027
Stage 2 - Restricted Call for Proposals <i>Testing and Implementation</i>

Applicants who successfully complete Stage 1 will be invited to submit their proposals for Stage 2. Under Stage 2, EU4Culture II will provide funding of up to EUR 60,000 per grant and will support following activities:

- Implementing the roadmap models
- Evaluating the results for further refinement of the roadmap
- Development of sustainability plan

Indicative Timeline:

- Stage 2 - Call for Proposals: April 2027 - May 2027
- Implementation: May 2027 - December 2028
- Closure phase - impact assessment and reporting: January 2029 - March 2029

Note: receipt of a grant under Stage 1 does not automatically guarantee an invitation to Stage 2. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

2.2. Geographic and Sectoral Scope

Table 2: Geographic and Sectoral Focus

Geographic Focus	Sectoral Focus
Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions	Audiovisual, digital, performing arts, music, design, creative innovation

EU4Culture II will support the establishment of one Living Lab per each region identified in the table above.

Submitted applications may adopt either a multi-town or a location-specific framework.

- A **multi-town framework** covers several geographic units within the region and brings together stakeholders from multiple towns and villages.
- A **location-specific framework** focuses on the ecosystem of a single town and engages stakeholders from that locality.

Applications adopting a multi-town framework are strongly encouraged.

Activities implemented under this Call for Proposals must directly contribute to strengthening local **creative ecosystem**, with a primary focus on the identified sectors (cf. Table 2).

2.3. Key Concepts and Methodology

The creative platforms will operate according to the Living Lab methodology.

Table 3: Living Lab Methodology

Living Lab Methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ User-centred approach: End users (e.g. artists, cultural practitioner, cultural organisations' service users, creators, innovators, cultural actors, and local communities) are directly involved in identifying needs, shaping ideas, developing solutions and evaluating outcomes.

- **Multi-stakeholder involvement:** Living Labs bring together artists and cultural professionals, cultural organisations and hubs, civil society organisations, business and startups, researchers, academia and local governments and other relevant stakeholders.
- **Co-creation:** Stakeholders collaborate throughout the entire process to jointly develop and co-create solutions, services or products.
- **Real-life context:** Developed models, projects, approaches and solutions are tested in real and local settings.
- **Iterative process:** Solutions are continuously refined through ongoing feedback, learning and adaptation.

How Living Lab differs from other structures

Network vs Living Lab	Association vs Living Lab	Hub vs Living Lab
<p><i>Network</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connects actors ▪ Focus on exchange and communication <p><i>Living Lab</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brings actors together to co-create ▪ Focus on real-life testing and joint action 	<p><i>Association</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal membership organisation ▪ Represents members' interests <p><i>Living Lab</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open, multi-stakeholder platform ▪ Develops and tests solutions collaboratively 	<p><i>Hub</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shared space or support structure ▪ Provides services and resources <p><i>Living Lab</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process-driven platform ▪ Enables experimentation with users and communities

2.4. Examples of Eligible Activities (Stage 1)

The activities listed below are illustrative and serve as a reference.

Table 4: Examples of Activities

Examples of Eligible Activities

Defining Living Lab framework and operational structures:

- Establishment of the comprehensive framework for the Living Lab (inc. vision and objectives, societal, cultural and innovation challenges to be addressed, mapping of the local ecosystem)
- Establishment of governance and management setup, with clear definition of operational goals
- Securing infrastructure and resources

Actions for ensuring stakeholder engagement:

- Confirmation and reassessment of relevance of each stakeholder, readiness and motivation for cooperation
- Definition of roles, expectations and potential contributions

- Designing user-engagement methods and organisation of working meetings, co-creation workshops etc.
- Establishment of co-creation mechanisms and feedback collection mechanisms

Actions necessary for roadmap development:

- Ecosystem mapping and research
- Inclusive processes for development of shared vision and objectives
- Validation of priority challenges with stakeholders
- Co-design of the solutions for identified challenges
- Develop monitoring and evaluation framework
- Develop initial sustainability plan

Expected Results

- ➔ Living Lab established and operational, including mandate, scope, and governance model, defined and functional operational framework, management structures and processes
- ➔ Inclusive co-creation mechanisms and collaboration models are established
- ➔ Creative ecosystem roadmap, including detailed action plan, monitoring framework and sustainability plan) developed and validated

Activities that will NOT be supported

- Activities that do not contribute to the achievement of the call objectives
- Standalone projects, events or actions
- Activities focused only on the applicant's own programme, visibility, or organisational needs

2.5. Members and Stakeholders of the Living Lab

Table 5: Living Lab Members and Stakeholders

Living Lab Manager (managing organisation)

The Living Lab manager is the organisation that receives the grant under this Call for Proposals. As the grant beneficiary, it acts as the formal contractor and is fully responsible for fulfilling all contractual obligations.

The Living Lab Manager leads, coordinates, and manages the Living Lab, including operational, financial, administrative, and reporting responsibilities.

Members of the Living Lab

Members of the Living Lab are organisations and/or natural persons invited to participate in the Living Lab. These may include:

- CCS organisations,
- local artists and cultural professionals,
- local educational, training or research organisations,
- public sector bodies representing the field of culture,

- local entrepreneurs representing the sector of culture or relevant crossing sector (e.g. cultural tourism, hospitality, youth).

A Living Lab must consist of a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of ten (10) participating entities and/or natural persons.

Living Lab members must be directly engaged in Living Lab activities, including co-creation, testing, and piloting processes, and have clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the Living Lab framework.

Secondary Stakeholders of the Living Lab

Secondary stakeholders are actors who are not formal members of the Living Lab but are involved through targeted outreach and engagement activities. These may include local policymakers, businesses, and relevant local community groups. Secondary stakeholders may contribute through providing insights and feedback, validating results, and supporting dissemination and transferability of best practices.

2.6. Additional Support

EU4Culture II will additionally provide non-financial support to the grant beneficiaries of this call. This support will complement the financial grant and will include:

- ➔ **Mentorship** - Each Living Lab will be supported by a mentor who will provide mentorship and guidance for the development of the roadmap and support reflection, structuring, and adaptation throughout the process.
- ➔ **Internationalisation and Networking** - Members of the Living Lab will benefit from peer-to-peer learning and internationalisation opportunities, including professional exchanges, cooperation, and strengthened engagement with European cultural networks and partners.
- ➔ Living Labs will be supported by **capacity-building** activities.
- ➔ **Synergies with Cultural Intermediary Organisations** - Local cultural and creative ecosystems will be further strengthened through the engagement of EU4Culture II-supported cultural intermediary organisations. To maximise impact, these organisations will be encouraged to build synergies and ensure complementarity with Living Lab actions.

3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY EU4CULTURE II

In the framework of the current Call for Proposals i.e. Stage 1 of the Grant Scheme maximum amount of the EU contribution to be allocated for each Living Lab - EUR 9,500.

The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

4.1. Eligibility of Applicants

To be eligible to apply for the Stage 1 of this Call, the applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

- be a legal entity (public or private body) registered and based in Ukraine located in government-controlled areas of Ukraine.
- be registered as legal entity and operating for at least two (2)¹ years on the date of the deadline for the submission of the application
- be non-profit organisation
- have a proven record of operational activities in the field of cultural and creative sectors in the areas identified as the geographic focus of the call (cf. Table 2) for at least 2 years on the date of the deadline for the submission of the application.

Who cannot apply?

- public authorities and governing bodies in particular ministries, city halls and municipalities
- commercial or for-profit legal entities

*If awarded the grant contract, the grant beneficiary will act as **the Living Lab** Manager and will be fully responsible for the implementation and management of the action.*

4.2. General Conditions

Before submission the application, the applicant must confirm that all information provided in the application is correct, complete, and up to date, and that the applicant complies with the conditions for receiving EU funding, including (but not limited to) eligibility requirements, financial and operational capacity, and exclusion criteria.

During the contracting stage the applicants may be requested to provide additional supporting documentation.

4.3. Operational Capacity and Exclusion

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the action (e.g., sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

Operational capacity will be assessed together with the award criteria on organisational capacity and relevant experience, based on the competence and experience of the applicant and its team, including the availability of operational resources (e.g. human, technical). If the

¹ Minimum threshold of two (2) years is required to ensure inclusivity, accessibility, and transparency. If the applicant has been registered for less than two (2) years but demonstrates a continuous and verifiable track record of at least two (2) years of relevant activities it can be considered as eligible. This rule applies in case an organisation has been re-established in a new legal jurisdiction due to force majeure, including political repression, conflict or legal impossibility to continue operations in the country or region of origin.

evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants must demonstrate their operational capacity through the following:

- general profiles, including qualifications and relevant experience of the staff responsible for management and implementation of the proposed action
- description of roles and responsibilities within the proposed action
- list of previous projects, including key projects implemented over the past two years.

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

The applicant will also be rejected, if it turns out that:

- During the award procedure the Applicant misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information.
- The applicant was previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

5. APPLICATION PROCESS

5.1. How to Apply?

Applications must be submitted through the Goethe Application Portal (GAP),

To apply, applicants should:

1. register on GAP via this **LINK**
2. complete the online application form
3. upload all required documents
4. submit the application before the deadline

Applicants are advised not to wait until the last day to submit their application.

Applications must be submitted in English. After submission, applicants will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt.

Multiple submissions

Application can be submitted only by a **single applicant**.

If several applications from the same applicant have been submitted, EU4Culture II will assess the last submitted application.

Applications with identical or similar content submitted by different applicants will be subject to a special assessment and may be rejected, due to suspicion of fraud.

In case of technical issues, please contact support.gap@goethe.de

5.2. Submission Deadline

The deadline for the submission of applications: **20 July 2026, 23:59 CEST**

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be evaluated.

5.3. Required Application Documents

- ➔ Completed online application form in GAP including following information:
 - the applicant profile
 - capacities and relevant experience
 - concept note on proposed Living Lab and implementation approach

- the applicant motivation
- management and team
- simplified budget plan
- ➔ CVs of the core team
- ➔ document confirming legal registration of the organisation
- ➔ self-declaration form (Annex A) signed by the applicant

The documents must be uploaded in PDF format

Incomplete applications will not be evaluated.

Note: Applicants invited to participate in Stage 2 will be required to submit, in addition to the application form, a detailed budget plan and supporting documentation, including (but not limited to) proof of legal entity validation, financial capacity, and bank account verification.

5.4. Information Session for Potential Applicants

EU4Culture II will deliver online Information session for potential applicants. within two weeks after the launch of the Call. The session will provide information on the nature, aims and benefits of the available opportunities within the Call and the application process. The session will be held in Ukrainian. Information session will be recorded; the link will be available on GAP portal.

Date: 8 July 2026

Time: 11:00 Ukraine time /10:00 CEST

Registration is required to attend the online information session - **Registration Link**

Individual consultations in the framework of this Call for Proposals are not possible. No individual replies will be given to questions.

Questions may be asked during the information session or submitted by email to eu4culture@goethe.de, no later than **9 July 2026**, 23:59 CEST.

To ensure equal conditions for all applicants, all questions and answers as well as other important information will be published on **GAP application page** on **14 July 22 2026**. It is therefore advisable to consult the website regularly.

6. INDICATIVE TIMELINE (STAGE 1)

Table 7: Indicative Timeline (Stage 1)

Supporting Establishment of Creative Platforms (Living Labs)	
Stage 1	
Call Announcement	18 June 2026

Information Session	8 July 2026
Submission of Questions Until	9 July 2026 23:59 CEST
Publication of Answers	14 July 2026
Deadline for the Application Submission	20 July 2026 23:59 CEST
Selection	July 2026
Notification of Results and Contracting	September 2026
Implementation	October 2026 - February 2027
Reporting	March 2027

7. EVALUATION OF SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS

7.1. Formal and Eligibility Assessment

- ➔ The application is submitted before the deadline
- ➔ The application is submitted in English
- ➔ The application is complete and all required documents are provided
- ➔ Correct template for Annex A is used
- ➔ The applicant meets the eligibility criteria as per Chapter 4 of these Guidelines
- ➔ The planned activities are not and/or will not be financed from other European Union funds and are not and/or will not be financed by another action or work programme
- ➔ Annexes A is filled and signed by the applicant

If the formal and eligibility criteria are not fulfilled, the application is excluded insofar as the criteria concerned are minimum requirements.

7.2. Quality Assessment

Table 8: Assessment Criteria

Criterion	Guiding Questions	Max Points
Organisational Capacity, Relevant Experience and Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How strong is the applicant's experience in the cultural and creative sectors targeted by the call? ▪ How strong is the applicant's experience and presence in the proposed region? ▪ Does the applicant have relevant experience managing collaborative projects? 	30

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the applicant equipped with the resources, capacities, and expertise necessary for the successful implementation of the proposed action? ▪ How well does the applicant's motivation match the call objectives? 	
Implementation Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How well does the applicant demonstrate understanding of the local context? ▪ Does the composition of the living lab and engagement model ensure appropriate expertise and active partner engagement? ▪ Are coordination and communication mechanisms among partners effective? ▪ Are the proposed implementation methods adequate and well justified? ▪ Is the proposed approach realistic within the given timeframe and resources? 	30
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the application demonstrate efficient use of financial, human, and technical resources? ▪ Are roles and responsibilities of the implementation team clearly defined? 	15
Promotion of horizontal principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the application consider horizontal principles, such as inclusion, accessibility, gender equality, environmental responsibility, or involvement of underrepresented groups? 	10
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent does the application reflect sustainability elements (including sustainability of co-creation processes)? 	15
Total		100

7.3. Award Criteria

Table 9 Award Criteria

Award criteria	Minimum pass score (threshold)	Maximum score
Organisational Capacity Relevant Experience and Motivation	17	30
Implementation Approach	17	30
Efficiency	9	15
Promotion of horizontal principles	6	10
Sustainability	9	15
Overall (pass) scores	58	100

7.4. Strong vs Weak Applications - Do's and Don'ts (Applicant Guidance)

This table helps applicants understand what evaluators typically consider strong or weak in an application, based on the evaluation criteria.

Strong Application - (Do's)	Weak Application - (Don'ts)
<p>Relevance and Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Call objectives are clearly addressed ✓ Problem and expected impact is clearly defined ✓ Listed Living Lab members are relevant with clear vision of their contribution ✓ Application focuses on identified geographic areas and prioritises identified sectors 	<p>Relevance and Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Generic proposal not tailored to the call ✗ unclear problem definition ✗ No clear indication of relevance and the roles of members of the Living Lab ✗ The application does not consider geographic and sectoral focus of the call
<p>Action Design and Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear, logical and feasible action plan ✓ Strong and effective engagement models ✓ Management structures are clear and operational roles are well distributed ✓ Application demonstrates strong operational capacity of the applicant 	<p>Action Design and Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Unclear or overly ambitious action plan. ✗ Weak or missing coordination and engagement mechanisms. ✗ Living Lab members are passive or symbolic; engagement limited to consultation or information sharing. ✗ Vague management structure with unrealistic role distribution ✗ Operational capacity of the applicant is not clearly demonstrated.
<p>Budget and Cost-Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Budget is realistic and linked directly to activities; demonstrates value for money. 	<p>Budget and Cost-Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Costs are poorly explained or unrealistic; weak link between budget and planned activities.
<p>Horizontal Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gender equality, sustainability, inclusion and diversity are clearly integrated into activities and management. 	<p>Horizontal Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Horizontal principles mentioned superficially or not translated into actions.
<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear plan, cooperation and engagement models demonstrate sustainability and continuity 	<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ No credible plan for sustainability; engagement and participation

Use of AI

- ✓ AI is used responsibly and transparently to support drafting; content remains accurate, consistent and tailored.

Use of AI

- ✗ Over-reliance on AI tools; generic, repetitive or inconsistent text; factual errors or content not adapted to the call.

7.5. Conflict of Interest

The evaluation and award process will be organised in a way that ensures equal treatment, transparency, and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Applicants will be rejected if they were involved in the preparation of this call or have another conflict of interest that could distort fair competition and cannot be remedied.

All persons involved in the evaluation and selection process will be required to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest. If a conflict of interest is identified, the person concerned will not participate in the evaluation of the relevant application.

Applicants are also required to submit the Self-Declaration Form (Annex A) confirming that they are not subject to exclusion criteria.

8. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS AND CONTRACTING

The assessment results will be communicated via email indicated in the GAP profile.

Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding.

Further administrative or content related clarifications may take place.

9. BUDGET AND FUNDING

Successful applicants will receive financial support of up to **EUR 9,500** for Stage 1 of the grant call. The grant will be provided as a **lump sum**.

- ➔ A lump sum is a simplified cost option where a fixed amount is paid for achieving agreed activities or results.
The amount is defined in advance in the contract. Payments are not based on real costs or invoices, but on the successful delivery of outputs.
The calculation method must be transparent, justified, and budget efficient.

Applicants are required to provide **simplified budget plan** as part of the application. The budget is used to assess cost **efficiency, proportionality and justified allocation of costs**.

Verification of grant implementation will take place at the end of the action based on activities implemented, outputs and results achieved, the narrative report and its verification documentation.

The contracting authority reserves the right to request additional supporting documents to verify implementation or in cases of identified risks, inconsistencies, or suspected irregularities.

Although the Stage 1 grant is provided as a lump sum, the grant beneficiary remains responsible to comply with cost eligibility rules.

Principles applying to the grant

Non retroactivity

Beneficiaries may begin implementing their project only after their grant agreement is signed. Costs incurred before the signature of the grant agreement will not be eligible.

No-Profit

Projects supported by the European Union must not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the project carried out by the grant beneficiary. Proposed action must be non-profit in nature, and must not generate profit, dividends, or private financial gain from the grant funding.

No double funding

EU4Culture II will not cover costs already funded by another donor or funding source.

Eligible Costs - which expenses may be covered by the grant?

Eligible costs are the costs that:

- are relevant to the grant purpose and are necessary for implementation of the project,
- are actually incurred by the beneficiary,
- are incurred during the implementation period of the project,
- are explicitly stated in the budget plan,
- meet the requirements of the applicable tax and social security provisions, and
- are appropriate and justified, as well as in line with the principle of sound financial management, especially regarding economy and efficiency.

Eligible costs include:

- staff costs
- travel costs
- costs of services (external expertise, especially digital services, translation, design, production costs, etc.),
- purchase costs for materials, (digital) tools, equipment and accessories (new or used), which are specifically intended for the project,
- administration costs (office rental, rent of space/equipment for relevant events, consumables/materials, etc.) directly related to the project,

Non-eligible costs

The following costs are **not eligible**:

- Debts and debt service charges (interest);
- Provisions for losses, debts or potential future liabilities;
- Costs specified by the beneficiary which are financed through another project or fund that already includes a European Union grant;
- Purchases of land or property, unless they are necessary for direct implementation of the measure and comply with the conditions defined in the grant contract for this situation (for instance restitution to the Goethe-Institut);
- Currency exchange losses;
- Credit to third parties, unless otherwise specified, for example in the grant contract;
- Benefits in kind (with the exception of voluntary work);
- Performance-related bonuses that are included in staffing expenses.

Important: conflict of interest should be avoided at all times!

10. GRANT PAYOUT SCHEME

The grant will be transferred according to the following rule:

After grant signature 75% of the grant amount will be transferred. There will be no interim payments. Balance payment will be paid after submission and approval of the narrative report and its respective verification documentation, no later than two (2) months after the end of the implementation period.

11. REPORTING

The grant beneficiary must deliver interim and final narrative reports.

The **Interim Report** shall provide an overview of progress achieved by the third month of the implementation period.

The **Final Narrative Report** shall give a comprehensive overview of the action's implementation and achievements. The report shall include sources of verification – demonstrating that activities have been implemented and the results have been achieved. Final Narrative Report shall be submitted no later than one month after the official end of the implementation period (February 2027).

Detailed information on reporting and the report templates will be provided during grant contract signature.

EU4Culture II will evaluate the grant application for Stage 2 (Restricted Call for Proposals) only after approval of the Final Narrative Report.

12.PROMOTION OF HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

The proposed projects must, whenever possible, support and following horizontal principles, in line with EU policy and the core values of the EU4Culture II programme including.

- Gender equality
- Environmental sustainability
- Equal opportunity and multi-ethnicity

Where relevant, applicants should consider how the proposed action can:

- improve access to cultural opportunities for underrepresented or disadvantaged groups
- promote gender equality and non-discrimination
- support participation of transnational and local communities
- reduce environmental impact
- create safe, respectful, and inclusive spaces for cooperation and exchange
- support inclusion of Jewish communities and combating antisemitism

The applicant is invited to highlight how these horizontal principles are integrated in the project activities and outputs. Furthermore, applications are expected to underline the specific measures planned at the operational level for respecting these principles.

13.VISIBILITY

The grant beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the financial support is used. In this respect, they are required to highlight the name and use the logo of the European Union on all their publications, posters, programmes, and other products produced under the financed project.\

14.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 related grant process.

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

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

15. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their application is complete, accurate, and submitted before the deadline.
- Only applications submitted through the Goethe Application Portal will be considered. Applications sent by email or submitted after the deadline will not be evaluated.
- If an applicant submits more than one application, only the latest submitted version will be assessed.
- EU4Culture II reserves the right to request clarifications or additional documents during the evaluation or contracting process. However, applicants may not substantially change their proposal after the application deadline.
- Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. The final award depends on eligibility, evaluation results, available budget, and completion of the contracting procedure.
- EU4Culture II reserves the right not to award all available funds or to cancel the call if necessary.

16. CONTACT INFORMATION

- Programme Coordination Office: eu4culture@goethe.de
- Country Coordinator: Daria Moskalevych, Daria.Moskalevych@goethe.de

17. ANNEX TO THE APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- Annex A: Self-Declaration

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Applicant	Legally registered, eligible organisation which applies for the grant call
Contracting authority	Organisation which issues the grant (Goethe-Institut within the framework of this call)
Creative Ecosystem	Connected network of people, organisations, and resources that work together to enable cultural and creative activities to develop, grow, and sustain themselves
Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS)	All sectors whose activities are rooted in cultural values and/or artistic and other creative expressions
Eligible costs	Costs that comply with the funding rules of the programme, are necessary for the implementation of the proposed initiative, are justified, documented, and incurred during the approved project period
Focus Regions	For the purpose of this Call, “focus region(s)” refers to the specific geographic areas identified by the programme within the participating countries, where the core activities supported under this call must be implemented.
GAP	The Goethe Application Portal; a digital application portal for communication and conducting the award process
Grant Beneficiary	Selected applicant after signature of the grant contract
Living Lab	A creative, open, and multi-stakeholder platform that brings together public, private, civil society, and academic actors to collaboratively co-create, test, and scale innovative solutions in real-life contexts
Living Lab manager	The contractor and grant beneficiary responsible for establishing, operating, and coordinating the Living Lab, with full contractual, financial, administrative, and reporting responsibilities within the framework of this grant scheme
Lump Sum	A fixed amount of financial support agreed in advance, paid for the implementation of predefined activities and achievement of expected results, rather than reimbursement of individual eligible cost items
Open grant call	A publicly announced funding call open to all eligible applicants meeting the defined criteria
Restricted grant call	A call limited to a predefined or invited group of eligible applicants
Roadmap	In the context of this call, a community-driven strategy that supports the growth and sustainability of the cultural and creative sector and includes pilot actions, result assessment mechanisms, and sustainability components