



**SPACES OF
CULTURE**



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

DEADLINE: 21 JUNE 2026



Are you a cultural and/or civil society organisation in Sub-Saharan Africa, looking to start or strengthen an Africa-Europe collaboration project in culture?

Are you interested in expanding your partner network across Africa and Europe and exploring approaches to fair and equal collaboration in cultural relations between the two continents?

Do you want to engage with other African and European partners to respond to local challenges through a co-creative and innovative cultural project? And are you looking for funding?

The Spaces of Culture funding scheme, part of the EU-funded Africa-Europe Partnerships for Culture programme, is looking for new and exciting collaborative cultural relations projects taking place in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Projects can take any format, focusing on arts, creative industries, digitalisation, education, gender, heritage, human rights, social inclusion, sports, sustainability, tourism, youth and others. Whether you are looking to organise networking and knowledge sharing activities, festivals, performances, exhibitions, artist residencies, to set up new networks to develop cultural infrastructure, or any other cultural relations project activities, the Spaces of Culture programme could be an exciting opportunity for you and your partners.

Projects are expected to practice mutual listening and learning, engaging in dialogue, co-creation, and joint capacity building.

Your starting point is to develop new or existing collaboration between Sub-Saharan African and European partners, coming together on equal footing to co-develop a project proposal that responds to local challenges and addresses relevant topics with a view to achieve social impact.

A successfully implemented project will:

- be co-developed and co-implemented by the different partners involved;
- address locally relevant and urgent topics;
- show innovation in its local context;
- build strong partnership that lasts beyond the project.

Find out more about the possibilities in this Call for Proposals!

Cover photo: Frequency Shift in Nairobi (Kenya), Spaces of Culture project 2025-2026. Photo: EUNIC

AFRICA-EUROPE SPACES OF CULTURE

Spaces of Culture is part of the wider Africa-Europe Partnerships for Culture programme, funded by the European Commission. Africa-Europe Partnerships for Culture fosters cooperation on an equal footing between African and European artists, creators and cultural professionals and aims to strengthen cultural exchanges at regional level, by supporting cross-border projects and partnerships in all cultural and creative sectors. Developed with artists and cultural professionals from Sub-Saharan Africa, the programme ensures African voices remain central throughout implementation. The programme is structured along the lines of a continental, a West African and a Southern African component.

The continental component aims to foster continent-to-continent and people-to-people cultural exchange, co-creation and co-production. A portion of this component is dedicated to the **Spaces of Culture** funding scheme, managed by EUNIC – EU National Institutes for Culture, and the subject of this Call for Proposals.

The Spaces of Culture programme brings an exciting opportunity to:

- place focus on networking and relationships, new audiences, and opening up civic space;
- continue to cultivate and develop a shared cultural relations approach to cooperation between Africa and the European Union (EU);
- explore in more depth approaches to fair collaboration in Africa including new and balanced partnerships between Europe and Africa and considerations of ethical sensitivities linked to colonial legacies.

The programme is modelled after the European Spaces of Culture scheme, which since 2019 has been putting the European Union's approach to international cultural relations into concrete action in countries outside the EU.

This call, besides being tailored to Sub-Saharan Africa, deepens the work done by European Spaces of Culture by supporting new alliances with local actors that are until now less involved in Africa-Europe cultural relations, as well as a broader implementation of the *Team Europe* approach, by involving a wider range of EU Member States.

Not only do such initiatives create innovative and meaningful projects, but they also strengthen local and fair partnerships between African and European actors, place on the agenda important societal topics and lead to invaluable insights into the practice of international cultural relations between Africa and the EU.

The call has a financial envelope of **EUR 350,000**, supporting seven projects across Sub-Saharan Africa. Over the period 2025-2028, the programme aims to support a total of 21 projects, spread out over three calls.

ABOUT THIS CALL

The purpose of this Call for Proposals is to find and support concrete cultural relations projects taking place in Sub-Saharan African countries.

The call will support projects that are designed and implemented by triangular partnerships – based on equal access and co-ownership – of local cultural and civil society stakeholders from the country(ies) concerned, members of the EUNIC network, and EU Delegations active on the continent. Supported projects will demonstrate innovation and relevance to the local context and exemplify both fair partnerships and an elaboration of the *Team Europe* approach in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The call supports involvement of a broad range of EU Member States, with many EUNIC members having the ambition to start new relationships, open branches, or otherwise intensify their collaboration on the continent, while at the same time broadening the range and diversity of local partner organisations from the continent collaborating with European counterparts.

This approach also includes the flexibility to develop and support initiatives in countries on the continent where the presence of Member States is limited or with no existing EUNIC cluster. All EU Member States active on the continent therefore are invited to participate through their network of either cultural institutes or embassies.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Projects can take any format, focusing on arts, creative industries, digitalisation, education, gender, heritage, human rights, social inclusion, sports, sustainability, tourism, youth, and others. The call encourages contemporary and innovative formats, including digital or hybrid ones. As preparatory activities for the project, research, feasibility studies, and capacity building initiatives are possible. Projects could also have the potential to be upscaled and translated to a different context.

For European partners the invitation is to engage in projects that go beyond the projection and promotion of (the diversity of) European culture(s) in Sub-Saharan Africa. Project activities demonstrate a deeper understanding of **contemporary cultural relations** principles by practicing mutual listening and learning, engaging in dialogue, co-creation and joint capacity building with all partners involved.

Whenever possible and relevant, projects will foster free spaces of speech and of artistic expression, particularly in fragile or illiberal contexts. Project ideas stemming from countries notably **affected by political, societal, security or environmental fragility**, for instance where freedom of speech or artistic expression is severely restricted, are most welcome, even if the context may feel restrictive to propose a contemporary cultural relations project. The jury will take such sensitivities into consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Projects supported for funding should take place in the period **between 1 September 2026 and 31**

August 2027 in one or more Sub-Saharan African countries.¹ Applicants are encouraged to explore a **cross-border dimension** to their proposal, where relevant.

As the global cultural and civil society sectors are increasingly conscious that **culture contributes to achieving the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)**, this programme creates an opportunity to make this commitment explicit and concrete. All proposals are therefore required to indicate concretely how they contribute to achieving the UN SDGs and identify and justify specific goals.

Extra attention should be given to **widening access to culture and cultural collaborations**, especially amongst:

- youth;
- people with disabilities
- communities outside urban areas;
- communities living in fragile contexts, including environmental and security fragility.

PARTNERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Every proposal must be submitted as a single application representing **a triangular partnership of African and European organisations**, with all partners actively engaged in the co-design and implementation of the project. Eligible partnerships consist of:

- A minimum of **three key local cultural and/or civil society partners**. Partners may be public bodies. Specific attention should be given to widening access to the partnership to actors who have been less involved in such intercontinental projects.
- A minimum of **three Full EUNIC members** is required. EUNIC members are national institutes for culture or other organisations acting for or on behalf of an EU national entity – these could be branches of national cultural institutes or embassies of [EU Member States](#). A list of EUNIC members can be found here: <https://www.eunic.eu/about>. EUNIC collaboration is formalised in so-called clusters, which can be found here: <https://clusters.eunic.eu/about>.

Note that EUNIC members are also present in countries where no cluster is established. These countries are still eligible, and in such cases, the minimum threshold of EUNIC members is **two**. Both EUNIC members' headquarters and their local branches are eligible. When in doubt about whether a potential partner can participate in a project, do not hesitate to contact the EUNIC team.

¹ Eligible countries are Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Republic), Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Please note that Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia are not eligible.

- The **EU Delegation(s)** in the concerned country(ies) must endorse the project and engage in the project in a concrete and meaningful way where possible. EU Delegations are diplomatic missions in non-EU countries or to international organisations like the African Union. They are located across the continent: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-world-0_en. They could get involved in project design, support with drafting the application, public outreach, facilitation of meetings and contacts including with EU Member States in the country concerned, or otherwise. For how to get engaged in projects, EU Delegations or partners are welcome to inquire with the EUNIC team.

The triangular partnership can be visualised as such:



Shaping these partnerships from the start is crucial for the success of co-creating the proposal and, if selected, co-implementing the project. To ensure **inclusive and shared ownership among the project partners from the start**, interested organisations are strongly recommended to approach desired collaboration partners as soon as possible with a 1-page free-form concept idea (rather than a full application only for sign-off by the partners), and from there in partnership work on the Spaces of Culture application.

- **Organisations are strongly encouraged to submit a 1-page concept idea to desired collaboration partners for consideration by 30 April 2026. Please take note of this deadline and avoid approaching potential partners too late.**

Partnerships are encouraged to be as inclusive as possible and involve local partners beyond already existing networks. Furthermore, in the spirit of widening access to EU Member States, these partnerships are a suitable opportunity for Member States that are starting cultural relations activity on the continent.

All partners are required to submit **written support letters** with the proposal, stating their commitment to the project as well as foreseeing their specific role in the project if selected. A template for such letters is provided in the application package. EU Delegations may submit an email stating their support to the project, in case submitting a signed letter is not possible.

Organisations can be involved in multiple applications at the same time. However, it is recommended to focus on one solid and well-elaborated proposal, rather than spreading too thin.

The project teams are required to form a shared **coordination team** consisting of one key local partner, one EUNIC member, and the EU Delegation. This coordination team will together form the first contact point for the EUNIC team concerning the project.

When submitting the application, one of the partners should be designated to sign a **grant agreement with EUNIC** and receive the awarded grant, if selected. This can be either a EUNIC member or a local partner. It is this partner's responsibility to receive from EUNIC and allocate the funds to other partners, in all transparency and according to the project budget and activities, and to coordinate the financial reporting back to EUNIC. Designated partners are required to self-evaluate their experience and capacity to receive such grants, as indicated in the application form. In addition, do get in touch with the EUNIC team to make sure the designated partner is a feasible fit.

Further attention points

- Allow enough time to exchange on the initial project idea – make sure all partners are fully aware and understanding of the project's aims to avoid confusion afterwards.
- Interested organisations are invited to have a look at [EUNIC's resources on Fair Collaboration in cultural relations](#), a set of resources authored by an independent group of experts in cultural relations.

FINANCING

Applicants can request **up to EUR 50,000** for their project's implementation. **Co-funding** from the partners or any third party is required and should be at least **5%** of the requested grant amount (e.g., for a grant request of EUR 50,000, co-funding needs to be at least EUR 2,500).

This co-funding may come from any of the partners or source, except for the EU Delegation, as that would be considered double funding by the EU.

All applicants should submit a **standardised budget form** with their application form, estimating the costs of implementation of the proposed project and a narrative justification of estimated costs. A budget template is provided to that end. Once selected, project teams may be asked to revise and detail their budgets for final approval.

Eligible costs are those related to the project and its actions (fees for artists and experts, travel and accommodation, catering, rental of venues or equipment, production of material, etc.), including the hiring of external coordinators/consultants to carry out certain components of the project (studies, mapping of resources, etc.).

Due to EU regulations, **certain communications costs are not eligible**, such as setting up websites, social media promotion, and the production of promotional material. Partners are expected to cover such costs outside of the budget. Event photography/videography, documentation and publications following project activities are eligible.

Other ineligible costs are overhead costs (organisational costs unrelated to the project), the project partners' permanent staff costs, as well as costs related to the development of infrastructure. In-kind contributions cannot be included in the overall budget of the project.

Pre-payment of 80% of the awarded grant will be made after an agreement is signed and upon receipt of an invoice before implementation. A **final payment** (the remaining 20%) will be made upon receipt of a final financial and narrative report. All receipts related to project costs should be kept and made available for a possible audit.

The partner signing the agreement will receive the payments on behalf of the project partners and is responsible for the financial administration of the project, including ensuring compliance with local financial and tax regulations. This partner will also be responsible for submitting the final financial report, unless otherwise specifically agreed with EUNIC.

Further attention points

- All costs must be presented in EUR. The budget form provides space to additionally include costs in local currency.
- The budget form requests justification of each expense line presented.
- Please use the calculation of unit x unit costs where necessary.
- Cost estimates should reflect realistic rates for your country or region and must be necessary for the activities presented.
- Ensure all partners get the chance to reflect on and approve the budget before submission.

SELECTION CRITERIA

All applications will be evaluated along the lines of the same selection criteria below. These reflect – alongside questions such as on objectives, target groups, and proposed activities – the questions in the application form. The maximum points that can be scored per criterion are included in the application form.

Relevance to local context (max. 25 points)

The proposal describes the local context, including challenges and opportunities, and the proposal's relevance to that context. The needs of the local target audiences, civil society, and/or cultural sector to be addressed are clearly identified. The project description is convincing and target groups that are identified fit the objectives that are outlined. In conversation with the EU Delegation, the strategic importance of the project to wider EU priorities is made clear.

Partnership set-up (max. 20 points)

An inclusive approach is at the core of the design and implementation of the project. The proposal includes active inclusion, participation, and governance of all partners: EUNIC members, EU Delegation, local partners, and other stakeholders and proposes measures to ensure ownership by all. The proposal clearly and concretely describes the added value and involvement of each partner.

Innovation (max. 20 points)

The proposed project brings new perspectives and processes to Africa-Europe collaboration through culture and goes beyond traditional one-off events:

- New concepts or ways of working with local cultural sectors, including digital cultural relations, based on local contexts and needs of local communities;
- The proposal actively seeks participation of (local and European) actors that are new in this field;
- New ideas on sustainability, accessibility and inclusivity, or entrepreneurship in culture;
- New ways of strengthening culture as a vector to promote values such as artistic freedom (of expression), social cohesion, equality, and accessibility and inclusivity.

Impact foreseen (max. 20 points)

The proposal states concrete, realistic, and sustainable foreseen results and includes activities and expected results that will last beyond the timeframe of the project that clearly link back to the context and challenges described. Mid- or long-term impact on societies, local cultural scenes, and other target groups are foreseen. The proposal includes concrete mechanisms and indicators to monitor and evaluate the project. The proposal demonstrates how the objectives, activities, and impact foreseen contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Individual SDG(s) is/are clearly specified and concretely elaborated on.

Feasibility and cost-effectiveness (max. 10 points)

The project's activities are realistic within the timeframe and budget provided and within the local context. Possible risks are considered, and mitigation is foreseen. Activities are appropriately reflected in the budget and proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the activities mentioned and fair remuneration to artists and experts.

Environmental sustainability (max. 5 points)

The project lays out a strategy for sustainable resources for its activities, addresses and environmental sustainability as a topic and, where relevant, raises awareness of and advocates for climate action.

SELECTION PROCESS

The EUNIC team will carry out a first eligibility check of incoming applications. An independent jury of experts (both from Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, but all with thorough knowledge of and experience with Africa-Europe cultural relations), will collectively decide which proposals are to be selected based on the selection criteria and ensuring geographic and sectoral diversity.

The independent nature of the jury ensures concentration on quality and relevance to the overall objectives of the programme, but also relevance to local contexts. The jury will be composed of at least four persons and established based on a set of criteria:

- Relevance of knowledge and expertise in the cultural relations between Sub-Saharan Africa and the EU;
- Experience in evaluation of grant programmes;
- Diversity of professional roles and profiles and lived experience with different regions on the continent.

All applicants will be informed about the decision directly after selection and will receive feedback on their application.

Selected projects will receive feedback from the jury and possible conditions to their selection and will have the time to review and deepen their project plans in a two-month inception phase. Possible elements to investigate in more detail are, if needed:

- Making activities and timelines more concrete;
- Making more concrete the approach to actively involve all partners in different facets of implementation (programming, decision making, evaluation, etc.);
- Elaborating on strategies for evaluation;
- Adding more detail in the budget;
- Elaborating potential future plans beyond the scope of the proposed project.

TIMELINE

30 March 2026	Launch of the Call for Proposals
30 April 2026	Recommended deadline for organisations to submit a 1-page concept idea to desired partners
April – June 2026	Webinars for potential applicants hosted by the EUNIC team
• 15 April	Webinar 1 - Introducing the call
• 14 May	Webinar 2 - Partnership & project support
• 9 June	Application clinic
21 June 2026	Deadline for submission of proposals (by 23:59 CAT)
Mid-July 2026	Selection of proposals by the jury
July – August 2026	Contracting of beneficiaries
1 September 2026²	Start of implementation period
31 August 2027	End of implementation period
September – October 2027	Reporting of projects

IMPLEMENTATION

The eligible implementation period for supported projects is **between 1 September 2026 and 31 August 2027**.

The EUNIC team must be informed of any major changes in the implementation of the project's activities, as well as of any changes in the approved budget.

When implementing the project, all partners are obliged to follow **communication requirements** as set out in an agreement to be signed with EUNIC. All partners are expected to communicate about the project and its results. Specific communication guidelines will be shared to that end.

The EUNIC team will follow, and guide where necessary, all teams starting, implementing and evaluating their projects. All teams are expected to follow a specially designed monitoring and evaluation and reporting methodology, which will help both the project partners and EUNIC in compiling data, information, and results. It is therefore important to keep EUNIC updated about activities taking place during the projects, as well as developments in partnerships.

² Implementation may start earlier, upon agreement with EUNIC.

The EUNIC team will also host regular exchanges with all implementing partners, both collectively in live and online Spaces Labs towards community building and to discuss common themes and developments, and individually to discuss developments and challenges of the projects and partnerships. Implementing partners are expected to participate in such meetings.

HOW TO APPLY

The following documents need to be submitted:

- **Application form**, completed in English (see template)
 - Estimated balanced **budget**, completed in English and drawn up in EUR (see template)
 - **Support letters** from all identified project partners (see template)
- **Find all these application documents in [this Google Drive](#)**. Please download them locally on your computer before starting to work on them.
- **Translations of these documents are made available in French and Portuguese to facilitate drafting your proposal** (you will find them on the [EUNIC website](#)). Note that in case of conflict between these versions, the English version is binding.
- **All documents need to be submitted in English**. Submissions in other languages will not be accepted. Please note that evaluators will not penalise grammatical or language errors. The assessment will focus on the substance, ideas, and relevance of the proposal rather than language accuracy.

Please submit the complete application package **by Sunday, 21 June 2026 at 23:59 CAT** to spacesofculture@eunicglobal.eu.

Note that only complete applications using the provided templates and sent to the email address above before the deadline will be considered. All applicants will receive confirmation when the application has been received.

SUPPORT FROM EUNIC

Please do not hesitate to reach out the EUNIC Spaces of Culture team if you have any questions about the call or the application process, by contacting Thoriso Moseneke via thoriso.moseneke@eunicglobal.eu or Robert Kieft via robert.kieft@eunicglobal.eu.

We encourage you to start working on your application as early as possible to be able to resolve any potential issues in time. Please also consult the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for any question you may have about the call, criteria, or the application process. Webinars will be organised to inform interested parties about the call and application process. These webinars will be listed on the [EUNIC website](#).

For inspiration, please have a look at the first seven projects supported under Spaces of Culture [here](#).