

Connections Through Culture Grants 2026

Applicant Guidance Toolkit

This toolkit has been designed to provide applicants to **Connections Through Culture Grants 2026** with additional information to support their applications. It explains what the programme supports, who can apply, how funding works, what makes a strong application, and what applicants should prepare before submission. It also includes useful descriptions of key terms, practical guidance, and hints and tips to help applicants develop clear, eligible and competitive proposals.

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1. What is Connections Through Culture?

Connections Through Culture (CTC) is the British Council's flagship Arts grants programme supporting cultural partnerships and collaboration between UK-based and international artists, creative practitioners, cultural professionals and organisations.

For 2026, CTC provides one main grant offer for international cultural collaboration. This single offer also brings together activity that may previously have been supported through separate British Council Arts opportunities, including **Visual Arts Biennials Connect** and **Architecture, Design, Fashion and Craft Biennales and Festivals**. By bringing these opportunities together, applicants can apply through one open call, with a clearer and more streamlined application journey. We have also expanded the number of participating countries across the globe, creating more opportunities for UK and international partners to connect and collaborate. Through the 2026 round, CTC will award approximately **£1.4 million** in grants to support international cultural collaboration.

The programme supports meaningful relationships, cross-cultural exchange and long-term collaboration between the UK and participating countries. Projects can span a broad range of themes and art forms, including Architecture, Design, Fashion and Craft; Creative technology; Film; Literature; Music; Theatre and Dance; and Visual Arts.

The programme is designed to support creative practitioners, cultural professionals, artists, organisations, festivals, biennials, hubs and collectives that meet the eligibility requirements and can demonstrate a meaningful partnership and collaboration between the UK and a participating country.

Further information about the British Council's work across arts and culture is available on the British Council Arts website: <https://arts.britishcouncil.org/our-work>

2. What does the programme aim to support?

The programme aims to:

- Support new connections, exchanges and collaborations across arts, culture and the creative sectors in the UK and participating countries.
- Encourage co-creation, partnership development and long-term international relationship building.
- Enable cross-cultural and interdisciplinary collaboration, knowledge exchange and shared learning.
- Support inclusive, accessible, environmentally responsible and socially valuable cultural activity.

- Strengthen creative and cultural relationships between the UK and participating countries.

Applications should clearly show how partners will work together, what each partner will contribute, and how the project will create mutual benefit. Applications should demonstrate shared creative thinking, joint activity and a clear collaborative process that leads to an outcome, output and/or process.

3. Key information

Application dates	Applications open at 12:00 BST (UK time) on 17 June 2026 and close at 23:59 BST (UK time) on 12 August 2026 .
Who can apply	Eligible individuals and organisations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • artists • creative practitioners • cultural professionals • festivals • biennials • hubs • networks • collectives
Partnership requirement	At least one UK-based partner and at least one partner based in an eligible participating country.
Art forms and themes	Open to a broad range of topics/themes, art forms, and creative sectors.
Budget currency	Budgets must be submitted in pounds sterling, GBP.
Grant amount	Maximum grant amounts vary by country. Please check the participating countries table.
Project delivery period	December 2026 to December 2027. All funded activities must be completed by December 2027.
Final reporting	Within one month of project completion and no later than January 2028.
Application language	Applications must be submitted in English.
Application platform	Applications must be submitted through the Good Grants application platform.

4. Participating countries and available funding

Available funding, grant limits and the number of awards may vary between countries.

The maximum grant amount is awarded per project or partnership, not per partner. This means the grant must cover the full partnership activity, including costs for both the UK partner and the partner in the participating country.

Participating country	Maximum grant request per application	Country-specific notes
Argentina	£15k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and sustainability focus. • Lead Partners based in Argentina must read the additional country-specific legal, tax and payment guidance before applying.
Australia	£5k	
Bangladesh	£15k	
Colombia	£15k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and sustainability focus. • Lead Partners based in Colombia must read the additional country-specific legal, tax and payment guidance before applying.
Mainland China	£10k	
Egypt	£9k	
Indonesia	£10k	
Kazakhstan	£10k	
Kenya	£7.5k	
Lebanon	£10k	
Malaysia	£10k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and sustainability focus.
Mexico	£8k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and sustainability focus. • Lead Partners based in Mexico must read the additional country-specific legal, tax and payment guidance before applying.

Participating country	Maximum grant request per application	Country-specific notes
New Zealand	£5k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and Māori & Pacific Communities focus.
Nigeria	£10k	
Pakistan	£15k	
Palestine	£10k	
Peru	£15k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change and sustainability focus. Lead Partners based in Peru must read the additional country-specific legal, tax and payment guidance before applying.
Philippines	£10k	
Saudi Arabia	£15k	
South Africa	£6.5k	
Tanzania	£5k	
Thailand	£10k	
Tunisia	£10k	
Turkey	£10k	
United Arab Emirates	£10k	
Ukraine	£10k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants must provide evidence of appropriate war-related risk management and a safeguarding plan and follow FCDO travel advice for any in-person activity involving individuals travelling from outside Ukraine. In Ukraine, individuals must be registered as a private entrepreneur, ФОП, to act as Lead Partner and receive grant funding.
Uzbekistan	£10k	
Venezuela	£10k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change and sustainability focus. Lead Partners based in Venezuela must read the additional country-specific legal,

Participating country	Maximum grant request per application	Country-specific notes
		tax and payment guidance before applying.
Vietnam	£10k	
Western Balkans	£10k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia.

5. Who can apply?

Applications must involve collaboration between **at least one UK-based partner and at least one partner based in an eligible participating country**. Each partner must be legally based in the country they are applying from at the time of application and throughout the project activity period. Applicants must ensure that they are appropriately registered, including for tax purposes where required, and compliant with all applicable local laws and regulations in the country where they are based and where funded activity is carried out.

Eligible applicants may include:

- Artists and creative practitioners,
- Arts, creative and cultural organisations,
- Festivals and biennials,
- Cultural professionals,
- Creative hubs, networks and collectives,
- Organisations working across the arts and/or interdisciplinary sectors.

Eligibility requirements:

- For organisations, partners must be separate legal entities.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have the appropriate legal, tax or registration status to receive and manage grant funding in the country where they are based or operating.
- Country-specific legal or tax requirements may apply. Where relevant, applicants may be asked to provide registration numbers, tax information, proof of legal status or equivalent documentation during due diligence and provisional award stage.
- The Lead Partner will be required to provide banking details during due diligence and contracting. Please note that the British Council cannot make payments to sanctioned individuals, organisations or financial institutions.

- Applications involving projects organised by, or taking place as part of, Visual Arts or Architecture, Design, Fashion and Craft festivals, biennials or showcasing activity must be led by an organisation, festival or biennial, rather than by an individual artist, designer or practitioner.
- We cannot accept applications from funding bodies.

Additional partners

Applications must include at least one UK-based partner and at least one partner based in an eligible participating country.

Projects may also involve additional partners from other countries or locations where they add value to the proposed activity. However, the grant can only cover costs relating to the UK partner and the partner based in the eligible participating country. Costs for any additional partners based in non-participating countries or locations cannot be covered by the grant. Applicants should clearly explain the role of any additional partners and how they will be involved. We strongly recommend that all partners, including additional partners, agree clear roles, responsibilities and ways of working before the project starts. This could be set out in an inter-partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding.

6. What activities can be supported?

CTC can support a broad range of creative, arts and cultural activities, provided the project proposal is focused on meaningful relationships, cross-cultural exchange and long-term collaboration between the UK and the participating country. Projects can span a broad range of themes and art forms, including Architecture, Design, Fashion and Craft; Creative technology; Film; Literature; Music; Theatre and Dance; and Visual Arts.

Activities can be delivered digitally, face-to-face, or through hybrid approaches.

Projects may be at any stage of research, development or delivery.

Eligible activity may include:

- Co-creation and collaborative* artistic development.
- Residencies and exchanges.
- Workshops, panels, talks and knowledge-sharing activity.
- Research and development.
- Exhibitions, performances, presentations and showcases.
- Festivals and biennials activity.
- Digital innovation, including projects that combine art and technology in new or experimental ways.
- Showcasing activity, including biennale, design week and festival participation, where the showcase forms part of, or is itself the central context for, a collaborative project between

the UK partner and the partner in the participating country. For these projects, collaboration may be demonstrated through the way the work is produced, curated, presented, interpreted or contextualised within the showcase setting.

- Curatorial exchange, artist or designer participation, and the development, curation, interpretation or contextualisation of work for different audiences.
- Public programmes and audience engagement.
- Artist, designer, practitioner or participant development.
- Capacity building and shared learning.
- Interdisciplinary or cross-artform activity.

**For further clarification of our definition of ‘collaboration’, and how this may apply depending on your proposed activity, please see our FAQs.*

7. What applications are not eligible?

The following are examples of activity that may not be eligible:

- Projects without a UK partner.
- Projects without a partner based in an eligible participating country.
- Projects where both core partners are based in the same country.
- Projects where the partners are sister organisations or the same organisation operating in different countries.
- Projects that are not primarily arts, culture or creative sector focused.
- Projects solely for commercial purposes without clear artistic, cultural or collaborative objectives and outcomes.
- Projects outside the eligible delivery period.
- Applications requesting more than the maximum grant amount for the relevant country.
- Applications not submitted in English.
- Incomplete applications or applications that do not provide enough detail for assessment.
- Applications from funding bodies.
- Core staff salaries, normal contracted staff time, general operating costs and organisational overheads that are not directly attributable to the delivery of the proposed project are not eligible.
- Activity or costs that have already been funded by the British Council or another funder. Projects may receive co-funding from other sources, provided there is no duplication of funding for the same activity or cost lines.
- Activity that has already taken place, or costs incurred before the grant agreement has been signed.

This is not an exhaustive list. Applicants should read the full guidance, application form and FAQs before applying.

8. Project delivery period

Project delivery must take place **between 01 December 2026 and 31 December 2027***.

Applicants should ensure that their proposed activity, timeline and budget can be delivered within the eligible project period. Applicants should ensure that all funded project activity is completed by 31 December 2027. Final reporting should be submitted within one month of project completion and no later than 31 January 2028, to support programme evaluation and impact reporting.

While the eligible project delivery period runs from 01 December 2026 to 31 December 2027, applicants should carefully review the CTC timeline in **Section 18. While provisional selection outcomes are expected to be communicated from 14 October 2026 onward, the payment of grant funding will be subject to the successful completion of due diligence checks, receipt of required documentation and signature of the grant agreement. These steps will take place after the provisional outcome has been communicated.*

9. Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed against five criteria.

Criterion	Weighting	What we will assess
Quality and artistic/creative merit	25%	The strength, relevance and quality of the creative proposal, including track record and context.
Partnership and collaboration	25%	The quality of the partnership, mutual benefit, collaboration model and clarity of roles.
Feasibility and project management	25%	Whether the project is realistic, well planned and deliverable within the timeframe and budget.
Audience/participant engagement and impact	10%	The intended reach, benefit, impact and legacy of the project.
Equality, diversity, inclusion, environmental sustainability and social value	15%	How equality, diversity, inclusion, access provision, environmental sustainability and wider social value are embedded in the project design, delivery, and intended outcomes.

Each application will be scored from 1 to 5 for each criterion, using the following scale:

5 – Excellent: Exceeds expectations; highly relevant and impactful.

4 – Good: Strong alignment and feasibility, with minor areas for improvement.

3 – Satisfactory: Meets the basic requirements but lacks depth or clarity in some areas.

2 – Weak: Falls short in key areas; lacks a clear strategy or justification.

1 – Poor: Does not meet the criteria or is insufficiently developed.

10. Budget guidance

Applicants must submit a clear budget in pounds sterling (GBP).

The budget should:

- Be realistic and proportionate to the proposed activity.
- Show how the grant will be used.
- Include fair fees and appropriate costs.
- Include access provision costs, translation, travel, marketing, project management, production, fabrication and material costs, shipping, installation, de-installation and contingency* where relevant, and where proportionate to the proposed activity.
- Clearly identify which partner is responsible for each cost.
- Explain any other confirmed or pending income.
- Demonstrate how the budget will be fairly distributed between both partners.

We recommend that the grant funding is split as equally as possible between the UK partner and the partner based in the participating country. As a guide, applicants should aim for a 50/50 split where this is appropriate and realistic for the proposed project. We recognise that a 50/50 split may not always be possible. For example, one partner may be responsible for higher delivery costs, travel, venue hire, production costs, access provision costs, artist fees or local logistics. We also recognise that costs can vary significantly between countries, for example accommodation, travel, fees or venue costs may be higher in one country than another. Where the budget is not split equally, applicants must clearly explain the reason in the budget notes and show how the proposed split is fair, proportionate and supports a balanced and fair partnership.

**Applicants are encouraged to include a reasonable contingency within their project budget where appropriate. This should be proportionate to the size and nature of the project and clearly linked to potential delivery risks, such as increased travel costs, currency fluctuations, shipping costs, venue costs or other unforeseen changes.*

10.1 Access provision costs

10.1.1 Project audience and participant access provision costs

Applicants must include any project-related access provision costs within their main project budget and project plan. This includes costs to make activities, events, venues, communications or public-facing work accessible for audiences and participants.

These costs must be included within the maximum grant amount available for the country they are applying to.

10.1.2 Personal access provision costs

Applicants may request additional personal access provision costs on top of the project budget where these are needed by members of the core delivery team to manage and deliver the project. These costs must relate to the personal access requirements of core delivery team members only. Examples may include sign language interpretation, support workers, or reasonable costs for specialist equipment or software. Applicants should provide relevant details about the access provision required and the associated costs. Please note that requests for personal access provision costs are not guaranteed, although we will aim to support identified access requirements where possible. Childcare costs are not currently eligible.

11. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The British Council welcomes applications that consider equality, diversity and inclusion from the start. Applicants should explain how their project will identify and address barriers, support fair and meaningful participation, and include a range of people, perspectives and experiences.

This may include:

- Accessible venues, activities, communications and marketing.
- Sign language interpretation, live captioning or other access provisions.
- Working with underrepresented groups or communities.
- Providing fair pay and equitable working conditions for partners and contributors.
- Budgeting appropriately for access provisions and inclusion needs within the project plan.
- Considering different ways for people to engage and participate.

More information here [British Council Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy](#).

12. Environmental sustainability and social value

Applicants should consider how their project can reduce environmental impact and create wider social value for people, communities and the sector.

This may include:

- Reducing unnecessary travel and using lower-carbon travel options where appropriate.
- Holding some planning, meetings or activities online where this supports lower-impact delivery.
- Using local suppliers, materials, venues or production support where possible.

- Minimising waste and reusing, repurposing or recycling materials.
- Considering sustainable production, fabrication, installation and de-installation methods.
- Planning efficient transport, freight or shipping.
- Supporting skills development, knowledge exchange or professional development.
- Creating wider community, audience or sector benefit beyond the immediate project activity.
- Supporting inclusive participation, longer-term partnerships, networks, legacy, and wider community or sector benefit.

More information here [Social Value at the British Council](#).

13. Risk management and safeguarding

Applicants must show that the project is realistic and that key risks have been considered.

Risks may include:

- Travel delays or visa issues.
- Budget pressures or currency fluctuations.
- Partner availability.
- Safeguarding risks.
- Access barriers.
- Security or political risks.
- Shipping, installation or venue risks.
- Weather, conflict, postponement or disruption.
- Delivery delays.

Applicants should explain how these risks will be managed and what contingency plans are in place. Where relevant, applicants should consider risks linked to delivery in countries or regions experiencing instability, war, conflict, political unrest, sanctions, travel restrictions or rapidly changing security conditions.

Applicants should include realistic contingency planning and be prepared to adapt the project if circumstances change. This may include postponement, alternative delivery arrangements, changes to travel plans, or digital/hybrid delivery where appropriate and agreed with the British Council. Applicants are encouraged to include a reasonable and proportionate budget contingency to help manage unforeseen changes, including significant increases in travel, accommodation, shipping, production or material costs. This should be clearly explained in the budget and linked to the project's risk and delivery plan.

For physical showcases, exhibitions, installations or festival activity, applicants should consider risks such as travel disruption, shipping delays, installation issues, venue changes, insurance, postponement and alternative dates.

Projects involving children, young people, vulnerable adults, public-facing activity or higher-risk contexts should explain how relevant safeguarding risks will be managed.

For Ukraine partnerships, additional legal, tax, safeguarding, safety and travel requirements apply.

Please get acquainted with the [British Council Safeguarding Global Policy Statement](#).

14. How to apply

Applications must be submitted through the Good Grants application platform by the stated deadline.

Before applying, applicants should:

- Read the FAQs for guidance on use of AI tools, plagiarism, intellectual property and changes to approved projects.
- Check the eligibility criteria carefully.
- Confirm that the UK partner and participating country partners are eligible.
- Confirm that the Lead Partner meets all legal, financial and tax requirements necessary to receive and manage grant funding, including any required registrations, licences or tax obligations, and complies with all applicable laws and regulations in the country where they are based.
- Agree roles, responsibilities, ways of working and budget with all involved partners.
- Prepare the required information and supporting documents.
- Ensure the application is written in English and all questions are completed with the correct information and word limit.
- Allow enough time to complete and submit the application before the deadline.

Applicants who require access provision to complete their application should contact the British Council through the Enquiry Form provided in Section 19.

Access provision requests should include appropriate details, such as the type of access provision requested, any estimated costs, a brief explanation of what the provision is needed for, and how it will support the applicant to complete the application.

Applicants are encouraged to contact us as soon as possible and not to leave requests until close to the application deadline. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and we aim to respond within 3 to 4 working days on average.

15. Information required

- Information explaining the proposed project activity including the creative, artistic or cultural idea, objectives, relevance, intended outcomes and delivery approach.
- Information about the UK-based partner and the partner based in the eligible participating country, including whether they are applying as an individual or organisation.

- Information explaining how partners will collaborate, including roles, responsibilities, decision-making, communication and mutual benefit.
- A project timeline setting out key activities, milestones, locations, responsibilities and expected outputs.
- A detailed project budget in pounds sterling (GBP), including the grant amount requested, any additional income or in-kind support, the proposed budget split between partners and an appropriate contingency.
- Information about project management arrangements and feasibility.
- A risk-management overview covering relevant financial, delivery, travel, safeguarding, security, access and reputational risks.
- Information about any proposed travel and how the project could adapt if circumstances change.
- Information about intended audiences or participants, anticipated reach, impact and legacy.
- Information explaining how equality, diversity, inclusion, access provision, environmental sustainability and wider social value have been or will be considered in the project.
- Details of any personal access provision costs requested for members of the core delivery team, where relevant.

16. Supporting documents

- CV or biography, if applying as an individual or where named artists, designers or practitioners are involved.
- Partnership Letter of Intent (template provided on the programme website).
- Links, a portfolio or examples of previous work, where applicable.
- Relevant permissions, licences or letters of support, where applicable.
- Festival, biennial, venue or public presentation confirmation, where applicable.

17. Application checklist

Before submitting, applicants should check:

- The project includes a UK partner and an eligible country partner.
- The partners are separate legal entities, where applying as organisations.
- The project is arts, culture or creative sector focused.
- The project includes meaningful collaboration.
- The budget is accurate, submitted in pounds sterling (GBP), and within the grant limit.
- The project timeline is within the eligible delivery period.
- All required information questions are completed.
- All required documents are uploaded.
- The application is submitted in English.

- All partners have reviewed, discussed and agreed the grant project proposal and consent to its submission.
- Applicants should also read the FAQs for guidance on use of AI tools, plagiarism, intellectual property and changes to approved projects.

Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be assessed.

18. Timeline

Stage	Date
Applications open	17 June 2026 at 12:00 BST (UK time)
Applications close	12 August 2026 at 23:59 BST (UK time)
Eligibility checks and main assessment period	August to September 2026
Applicants notified of outcome (provisional selection)	From 14 October 2026 onward*
Grant agreements and grantee onboarding	November 2026
Project delivery period for grantees	01 December 2026 to 31 December 2027
First grant instalment payment (80%)	Payment processing is expected to take place during December 2026 and conclude by January 2027, subject to completion of due diligence, receipt of all required documents, signature of the grant agreement
Final reporting deadline	Within 1 month of completion, and no later than 31 January 2028
Final grant instalment payment (20%)	Following submission and approval of the final report, and in line with the payment terms set out in the grant agreement

**Please note that this timeline is indicative and may be subject to change depending on the number of applications received, assessment timelines, due diligence, contracting and any country-specific requirements. Successful applicants must not start funded activity or incur costs before a grant agreement has been signed. While provisional selection outcomes are expected to be communicated from 14 October 2026 onward, the payment of grant funding will be subject to the successful completion of due diligence checks, receipt of required documentation and signature of the grant agreement. These steps will take place after the provisional outcome has been communicated.*

19. Contact and further information

For questions about eligibility, access provision or the application process, applicants should contact the British Council using the official enquiry form: [Enquiry Form: Connections Through Culture 2026](#). **We aim to respond to enquiries within 3 to 4 working days on average.**

Further information about Connections Through Culture is available on the British Council Arts website: [Connections Through Culture Grants | British Council Arts](#)