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CALL FOR FUNDING
REQUESTS 2026

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International fund for cultural diversity

Investing in creativity. Transforming societies.

On 23 March 2026, the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) launches its 17th call for funding requests

The International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) is a key instrument of international cooperation and assistance for the [Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#), adopted by UNESCO in 2005.

Its purpose is to foster the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors in developing countries that are Parties to the 2005 Convention, through strengthening the means to create, produce, distribute and have access to diverse cultural goods and services.

As a multi-donor fund, the IFCD promotes South-South and North-South cooperation, while contributing to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including gender equality and poverty reduction.

Since 2010, the IFCD has invested US\$13.6 million through 175 projects in 77 countries in support of the creative economy and to bolster inclusive and sustainable economic growth. These projects cover a wide range of areas, from the development and implementation of cultural policies, capacity-building for cultural professionals and entrepreneurs, access to new markets, to greater participation in cultural life.

The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is an international standard-setting instrument that recognizes the sovereign right of States to formulate and implement policies and measures that support the emergence of dynamic and diverse cultural sectors.



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Basic information

Eligible countries

Projects must be implemented and/or benefit **eligible countries** only (developing countries that are Parties to the 2005 Convention). Applications from international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) must be implemented in two or more eligible countries and demonstrate that the proposed project has an impact at the sub-regional, regional or inter-regional level.

Project Duration

12 to 24 months

Project launch date

From May 2027 at the earliest

Amount

US\$ 100,000 is the maximum amount that can be requested*

Allocations will be sent in several installments:

- Beginning of the project: 50%
- Mid-way through the project: 30 %
- Completion of the project: 20%**

Language

The application and accompanying documents must be in English or French

Submission deadline

6 May 2026 (12:00PM, Paris time)

* The project budget must include the allocation of resources for project communication. It must also include the costs of an external financial audit to be conducted at the end of the project.

** If approved, a funding contract will be signed between UNESCO and the applicant. All payments by UNESCO to finance the project will be made in US\$ dollars. Please note that the recipient must be able to advance resources corresponding to the last payment, which amounts to 20% of the funding granted, in order to allow the finalization of the project activities.

Who is eligible?

The IFCD invests in projects that lead to structural and sustainable change through:

- The introduction and/or elaboration of policies and measures that have a direct effect on the creation, production, distribution of and access to a diversity of cultural expressions, including cultural goods, services and activities
- The reinforcement of human and institutional capacities of public sector and civil society organizations deemed necessary to support viable local and regional cultural industries and markets in developing countries

Who can apply?

- Public authorities and institutions from **eligible countries** (developing countries that are Parties to the 2005 Convention)
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from **eligible countries** (developing countries that are Parties to the 2005 Convention) that meet the definition of civil society*
- International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) registered in countries **Parties to the 2005 Convention**, that meet the definition of civil society* in the Operational Guidelines and that present projects that have an impact in developing countries at the sub-regional, regional or inter-regional level

Sectors of intervention

Projects may have a transversal (cultural policies or strategies, copyright, etc.) or sectoral focus. There are seven eligible sectors:

Audio-visual/cinema Design
Media arts Music Performing arts
Publishing Visual arts

* For the purposes of the 2005 Convention, civil society means non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, professionals in the culture sector and associated sectors, groups that support the work of artists and cultural communities. Criteria identified in the Operational Guidelines on civil society are: civil society have interests and activities in one or more fields covered by the Convention; they have a legal status in compliance with the established rules of the jurisdiction in the State of registration; they are representative of their respective field of activity, or of the respective social or professional groups they represent. (Operational Guidelines on the Role and Participation of Civil Society, Article II).

Types of eligible projects

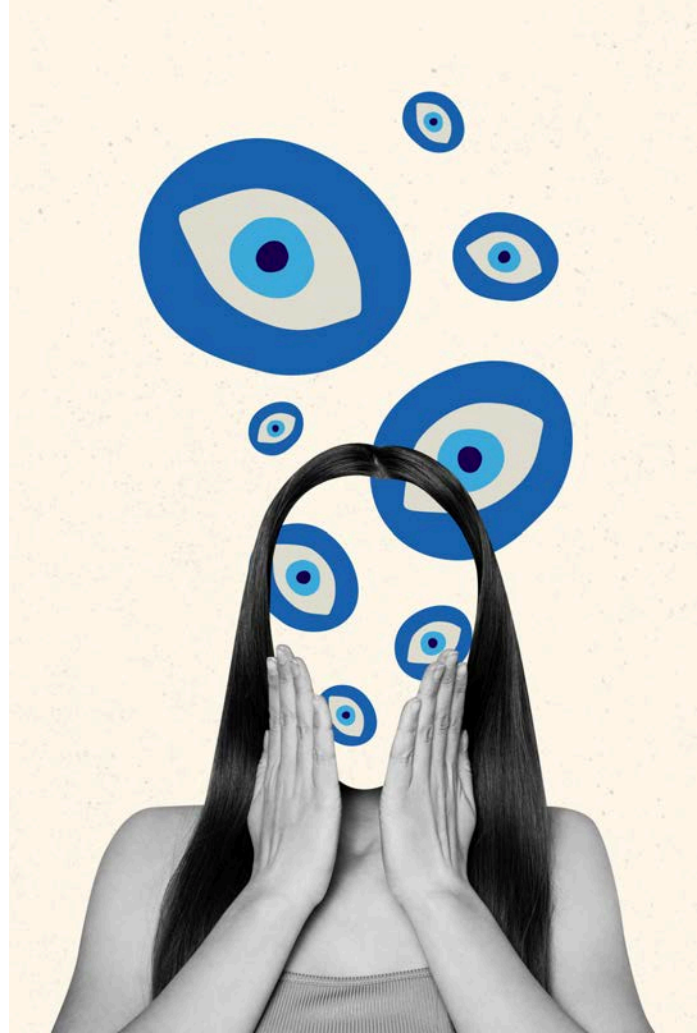
I. Projects submitted by **public authorities and institutions** that:

- Develop tools that contribute to decision-making and planning (mappings, sustainable statistical collection and processing systems, sectoral strategies, etc.)
- Create and/or strengthen public cultural agencies and institutions essential to the development of cultural industries, including developing the expertise of civil servants
- Establish and/or strengthen financing and market development mechanisms for cultural goods and services
- Implement international cooperation agreements and treaties aimed at a more balanced exchange of cultural goods and services
- Create and/or strengthen the pedagogical and organizational capacities of educational, vocational and technical training institutes in the cultural and creative sectors
- Promote the development of cultural industries in the digital environment, in accordance with the [roadmap](#) for the Implementation of Guidelines to Promote the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Digital Environment
- Strengthen participation in cultural life, in particular measures to promote engagement of vulnerable groups (including persons belonging to minorities and Indigenous Peoples) in the creation, production, distribution and access to diverse cultural expressions
- Create and implement measures or policies to promote gender equality in the cultural and creative sectors

2. Projects submitted by **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** that:

- Strengthen capacities of civil society focusing on policy participation, communication and/or networking
- Contribute to inform policy making, including monitoring and evaluation activities to determine the impact of cultural policies and measures to promote cultural industries
- Strengthen the pedagogical and organizational capacities of educational, vocational and technical training institutes in the cultural and creative sectors
- Create new financing opportunities and promote access to national and international markets for cultural goods and services
- Promote the development of cultural industries in the digital environment, in accordance with the [roadmap](#) for the Implementation of Guidelines to Promote the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Digital Environment
- Strengthen participation in cultural life, including measures to promote engagement of vulnerable groups (including persons belonging to minorities and Indigenous Peoples) in the creation, production, distribution and access to diverse cultural expressions
- Create and implement measures to promote gender equality in the cultural and creative sectors

What projects are not eligible?*



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- Projects exclusively aiming at the production of cultural and artistic works and events
- Projects related to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (please refer to the [Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#))
- Projects related to tangible cultural heritage including World Heritage sites (please refer to the [World Heritage Fund](#))
- Projects aimed at offsetting a deficit, repaying a debt or paying interest
- Projects exclusively financing permanent working spaces and/or equipment
- Projects that are conceived as scholarships or grants for personal needs
- Projects financing the physical construction or the restoration of buildings
- Projects that focus on primary and secondary school environments
- Projects sustaining ongoing activities with recurring costs
- Projects that focus on cultural tourism

* In accordance with the Operational Guidelines on the Use of the Resources of the IFCD, National Commissions for UNESCO and any other organizations participating in the pre-selection or approval of projects submitted to the UNESCO Secretariat are also not eligible for IFCD funding.

Submission deadline

6 May 2026 (12:00PM, Paris time)*

Funding requests submitted after this date will not be considered for evaluation.

Prepare the funding request

1. Review the “Call for funding requests”
2. Create your account by registering [here](#)
3. Access your account by following the steps listed in the “[User Guide](#)” and download the “Project Framework”
4. Review the “[Annotated Guide](#)”
5. Gather required [complementary documents](#)

Submit the funding request

1. Complete the “Project Framework”**
2. Fill out the online “[Application Form](#)”***
3. Upload the “Project Framework” and complementary documents
4. Click on “Save and close” to finalize your funding request****

* To avoid technical problems at the time of submission, please ensure to submit your application well in advance of the deadline.

** Use Microsoft Excel (2011 or later versions) or similar applications.

*** In order to avoid any loss of information, it is strongly recommended to prepare all the information requested in the form in a Word document beforehand.

**** Please note that public institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can submit only one funding request per call. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) can submit a maximum of two funding requests per call. For more information on the application process, please refer to the [FAQ section](#).

Selection procedure

Step 1

National Commissions for UNESCO will form a pre-selection panel consisting essentially of representatives from Ministries of Culture and/or other Ministries responsible for the cultural industries and members of civil society organizations specializing in culture. They will review the application for relevance and feasibility, whether it meets the State's needs and priorities and if the proposal has been subject to a consultation among stakeholders. This panel will then perform an online **pre-selection of a maximum of four funding requests** (two maximum from public authorities/institutions and two maximum from NGOs) by **30 Juin 2026**, midnight, Paris time.

Step 2

Upon receiving the pre-selected applications from the National Commissions, the **UNESCO Secretariat** will perform a technical assessment to ensure that the applications are complete and fall within IFCD's areas of intervention. The Secretariat will also review applications from international non-governmental organizations at this stage as they do not go through the National Commission panel.

Step 3

All eligible applications will be evaluated by an **International Panel of Experts** from UNESCO's six regions. Each application will be reviewed by two members of the Panel against the evaluation criteria established for the IFCD. The results of the pre-selection, the technical assessment and the IFCD International Panel of Experts' evaluation will be published in **January 2027** on the **IFCD website**.

Step 4

Final recommendations by the International Panel of Experts will be communicated to the Intergovernmental Committee of the 2005 Convention, which will make the final decision on projects to receive the funding during its 20th ordinary session at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from **12 -15 January 2027**.

Step 5

The UNESCO Secretariat will inform the beneficiaries of the approval of their application, as well as the steps necessary to proceed with the elaboration of a contract for the implementation of the project.

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Evaluation criteria



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Funding requests to the IFCD will be evaluated against criteria on how they:

- Address the objectives, priorities and areas of intervention of the 2005 Convention and the IFCD
- Contribute to achieving concrete, measurable, realistic and sustainable results
- Meet the needs and priorities of the State where the project will be implemented, are feasible and relevant
- Have a potential structural impact leading to the emergence of a dynamic cultural sector
- Promote South-South and North-South-South cooperation; and support UNESCO priorities for: Africa, Gender Equality, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and youth
- Ensure that the project's impact/long-term benefits can be achieved and promote the sustainability of the project
- Satisfy the principle of financial accountability

The skills and competences of key people involved in the implementation of the proposed activities as well as the involvement of stakeholders in the design and implementation of the project will also be evaluated

An International Panel of Experts will evaluate the capacity of the applicant to implement the work plan and manage the budget, ensuring that:

- Overhead costs do not exceed 30% of the total budget
- Requested funds are to be spent principally on project activities
- Resources are not spread too thinly and are not used to support sporadic activities

Additional financial assistance, either in the form of self or co-funding, is highly advisable as a means to engage more partners in the process and to contribute to the smooth implementation and sustainability of the project



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For more information:
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www.unesco.org/creativity/en/international-fund-cultural-diversity

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Diversity of
Cultural Expressions

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