

Funding guidelines

“LOKAL – Programme for Culture and Engagement”

The following guidelines apply in conjunction with the general “Funding Guidelines of the German Federal Cultural Foundation”

(www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/en/about_the_foundation/general_funding_guidelines.html).

In times of polarisation, cultural organisations serve as important places of encounter for democratic community-building. In order to strengthen our country’s multifaceted cultural life at a local level, the German Federal Cultural Foundation has teamed up with the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb) and the European Cultural Foundation to establish the funding programme “LOKAL – Programme for Culture and Engagement”.

The model programme “LOKAL” is an application-based funding programme, with which the German Federal Cultural Foundation supports socially committed cultural organisations in cities and towns with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants. The aim of the funding measure is to enable cultural organisations to seek out local partners, artists and residents to develop projects, debate issues impacting society and organise events that promote social interaction and engagement. The German Federal Cultural Foundation has allocated up to 7.5 million euros to finance the programme.

To provide the funded cultural stakeholders with expertise, promote qualification and encourage them to network amongst themselves, the programme is accompanied by regular academy meetings, individual consultation services and European conferences.

1. Object of funding

Funding is awarded for the purpose of developing partnerships with local stakeholders, such as sports clubs, schools, daycare facilities, volunteer fire brigades and local

businesses, and to jointly develop artistic-participative projects, created in direct engagement with local residents. The funded projects should address local issues and debates and serve to organise community-oriented interactions in public space. The programme does not award funding to projects which exclusively finance existing partnerships or events already in planning.

Selected projects are awarded funding for four years. In the first year, project coordinators should conduct in-depth research on conditions 'on the ground', seek out suitable regional partners, define shared goals and develop initial joint project ideas. In the three-year implementation phase, local partnerships should be established and intensified, while joint artistic projects are planned and carried out.

Ideally, project coordinators should use their awarded funding in an environmentally conscious and resource-friendly manner when planning, carrying out and following up their projects in accordance with relevant legal regulations.

2. Academies, consultations and European conferences

Funding also supports academies, consultation services, European conferences and work shadowing measures.

The funded cultural organisations are eligible to receive targeted consultation from advisors on all project-related topics.

The several-day academy meetings, coordinated by the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), include workshops, specialist colloquiums and other professional training formats and will presumably take place twice a year at varying locations.

The European conferences, coordinated by the Federal Agency for Civic Education together with the European Cultural Foundation, will enable participants to share their experience in a European context. Participation in the academy meetings and European conferences is obligatory for the project coordinators.

In addition, the Federal Agency for Civic Education is supporting collaboration between the funded cultural organisations and partner institutions in Europe in the form of work-shadowing measures or the development of joint project modules. Cultural organisations receiving funding through "LOKAL" can apply separately for this additional funding through the Federal Agency for Civic Education.

3. Eligibility requirements

To be eligible for consideration, cultural organisations (with or without a physical venue), e.g. cultural associations, sociocultural centres, theatres, libraries, cultural centres and museums, should already be actively involved in diversity-oriented participatory processes and promoting social engagement at the local level. Furthermore, they should offer cultural events on a regular basis **exclusively in cities or towns with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants**¹. A special focus of the programme lies in supporting cultural stakeholders in cities and towns facing increased political polarisation at the local level. The applying cultural organisations must be based in Germany and constituted as a legal entity, e.g. as a foundation, association or public or private statutory body.

4. Funding amount

The German Federal Cultural Foundation has allocated a total of 240,000 euros to finance the programme over a four-year period.

Funding can be used to cover project management expenses tied to building and expanding partnerships and participative-artistic projects, as well as all costs (personnel and material expenses) resulting from the participative-artistic projects. Fundable expenses include project-related expenditures for meeting formats, educational activities and audience outreach measures. As a rule, the German Federal Cultural Foundation awards funding as shortfall financing in the form of a non-repayable project funding grant.

5. Own contribution and third-party financing

In recognition of the important civic commitment demonstrated by the cultural stakeholders in carrying out these projects, the German Federal Cultural Foundation does not require applicants to contribute monetary resources of their own as a condition for securing funding. Instead, the cofinancing requirement for the programme

¹ The population of the respective cities and towns must be lower than 100,000 inhabitants at the time of application. This condition is substantiated by the official statistics published by the German Federal Statistical Office. For more, visit [statista.com](https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1353/umfrage/einwohnerzahlen-der-grossstaedtedeutschlands/) listing all cities in Germany with populations over 100,000 inhabitants (last update 8 November 2024): <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1353/umfrage/einwohnerzahlen-der-grossstaedtedeutschlands/>

“LOKAL” can be met in the form of a non-cash contribution. The applying cultural organisations and associations are obliged to secure 10% of the total funding amount with their own non-cash contribution and quantify it accordingly in the Cost and Financing Plan. Alternatively, applicants may supplement their contribution with cash resources of their own and/or third-party funding if they wish.

6. Application procedure

Applicants are required to complete and submit the online funding application form for this programme, available on the website of the German Federal Cultural Foundation ([in German only](#)).

In the online form, we require you to provide a brief profile of the applying cultural organisation and describe how it has promoted diversity and social engagement in your town and/or region in the past. Also be sure to mention that your organisation regularly organises cultural events in a town or city with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants. You do not have to describe any concrete future projects at the time of application. These will be developed later during the funding period in collaboration with local partners.

Please upload the following documents together with your online application:

1. The application form (PDF template) with answers to the following questions:
 - a. What specific challenges are you currently facing with respect to social engagement and polarisation processes in your town/city and region?
 - b. What is your motivation for applying for funding through “LOKAL” and what role do artistic-participative projects play in this?
 - c. What kind of cultural stakeholders do you already collaborate with at the local level?
 - d. Which local groups (associations, institutions etc.) do you plan to establish and/or intensify partnerships with during the course of the four-year programme? And what could these local partnerships look like?
 - e. What benefits do you hope these partnerships and artistic-participative projects will bring to your institution and local residents? What criteria

and general conditions are most important to you when carrying out local artistic-participative projects?

- f. Why is your organisation especially suited to develop local, artistic projects on relevant issues and to promote social engagement?
2. A **Cost and Financing Plan** listing planned expenditures and income, as well as your own non-cash contributions; please use the template provided for this purpose by the German Federal Cultural Foundation ([in German only](#)).

7. Application deadline

Funding is awarded in two application rounds. The application deadline for the first round is **Friday, 14 February 2025**, and for the second round, **Friday, 13 February 2026**. The sending date of the online form is regarded as the date of submission. Only those documents received prior to the application deadline can be considered for evaluating the fundability of the proposals. Applications which are incomplete or submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

8. Selection decision

In the first step of the selection process, an independent jury of experts reviews the submitted applications and forwards its recommendations to the Executive Committee of the German Federal Cultural Foundation. The Foundation then arranges digital interviews with these applicants to discuss their respective project proposals in greater detail. The dates of these interviews will be announced in due time.

In the second step, the Executive Committee of the German Federal Cultural Foundation makes the final funding decisions based on the recommendations of an independent jury of experts. The dates of the closed-session jury meetings will be announced in advance on the website of the German Federal Cultural Foundation. Should an application be rejected in the first round of funding, applicants are permitted to reapply and submit a revised proposal for consideration in the next funding round.

9. Project period

Upon receiving funding approval, the four-year project period commences in June 2025 (first application round) and June 2026 (second application round). Awarded funding can only be paid out to the recipients upon conclusion of the funding contract in

accordance with the payment plan. The funding contract is generally concluded six weeks after the project coordinator (i.e. the selected cultural organisation which has been awarded funding) has uploaded all the required documents.

10. Legal basis

The German Federal Cultural Foundation awards funding in accordance with these funding guidelines, the provisions in §§ 23, 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the relevant administrative regulations (VV).

11. Payment and accounting

The approval, payment and accounting of funding, the proof and review of expenditures, as well as possible withdrawal from the funding contract or reclamation of funding are subject to §§ 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the relevant administrative regulations, insofar as deviations from the general administrative regulations are not explicitly permitted by these funding guidelines. The Federal Audit Office is entitled to conduct audits in accordance with §§ 91, 100 BHO.

12. Validity of the funding guidelines

These funding guidelines enter effect on 8 November 2024 and are subject to change.