

**Open Society Foundations (OSF)
Arts and Culture Program (ACP)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

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General

Q. How do I apply?

A: As a first step, please submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) about the project being proposed. Download the form (link to be inserted) from ACP's website and send it completed to the national coordinator (link to be inserted) in your country, if applicable, or alternatively to the appropriate ACP coordinator: Daniela Bolganschi (dbolganschi@osi.hu).

Q. What is a LOI?

A. A document submitted by an institution/individual seeking a grant or funding for a project. The LOI (link to be inserted) describes the purpose of the project, summarizes the project's goals, and includes financial information for the project. The LOI allows ACP to determine the relevance of the project and whether a full proposal is desired. The LOI must be completed in English or Russian.

Q. I was invited to submit an application. How do I apply?

A. A single application form may be used to apply to all ACP grant programs. This form (link to be inserted) can be downloaded from ACP's website. The Application Form should preferably be completed in English, however forms completed in Russian will also be accepted. Please use 12-point print size in Times New Roman font. If the proposed project includes a collaborative aspect, applicants must submit a letter from the proposed collaborator/s or partner/s confirming the arrangement described by the applicant. Please submit completed application forms via e-mail to OSF's national Arts and Culture

Coordinator (addresses provided below) if you are applying from one of the following countries:

National Coordinators

Armenia: Laura Gevorgyan – Laura@osi.am
Azerbaijan: Jahangir Selimkhanov – jselimkhanov@osi-az.org
Georgia: Ana Riaboshenko – ana@osgf.ge
Kyrgyzstan: Jildiz Kudaibergen – jil.kudaibergen@gmail.com
Mongolia: Ariunaa Tserenpil – artscouncil@magicnet.mn
Tajikistan: Gulandom Nabieva – gulandomn@libosi.tajik.net
Turkey: Esra A. Aysun - eaysun@c-u-m-a.org

If you are applying from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, or Moldova, please submit your applications to Daniela Bolganschi at: dbolganschi@osi.hu.

Please note that incomplete applications (that is, applications not properly filled in or missing one or more of the required components) will not be evaluated.

Q. Is there an application deadline for submitting a LOI or a grant application?

A. No. We accept and review LOIs and grant applications throughout the year.

Q. How long does it take to evaluate a LOI?

A. ACP will aim to evaluate a LOI within 2 weeks of receipt. Applicants will receive an e-mail that either invites the submission of a full application, or explains that ACP is not interested in a proposal at this time.

Q. How is my application assessed?

A. Applicants will be notified by the relevant national coordinator that the grant application was received. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in two stages. During the first stage, applications are reviewed by the relevant Open Society Foundations national office as well as by an independent expert whose recommendations will be submitted to the Arts and Culture office in Budapest. During the second stage, the application and supporting materials are reviewed by the ACP Advisory board.

Funding decisions will be made within three months of the date on which ACP confirms receipt of an application. All applicants will receive an individual notification concerning the status of their application. The application is evaluated by the advisory board, approved, rejected, or referred back to the applicant with a request for further information. Grant applicants will be notified within 2 weeks after the advisory board's decision.

Q. How long does it take to receive the final decision on a submitted proposal?

A. Applicants will receive a final notification within 3 months of the time that an application has been submitted.

Q. For urgent applications, can the applicant be notified sooner than 3 months?

A. We prefer to review grant applications within the specified time frame. But we may also consider review of urgent applications if the applicant can persuasively explain the need for an urgent assessment. Instances such as the last-minute loss of a sponsor or notification about a grant application can be considered urgent.

Q. How long does it take to receive actual funds after the approval notification?

A. It takes around one month after the receipt of an approval notification for the grantee to receive our funding.

Q. How long before the planned start date of the project should the application procedure be launched?

A: You are encouraged to submit your Letter of Inquiry preferably 5 months before the actual start date of the project.

Q. How can an organization prove its legal status?

A. The organization must submit a founding document such as its registration certificate with government authorities. The document must be accurately translated into English or Russian.

Q. Is it necessary to add a short translation of the legal documents enclosed in the application?

A. Yes, we require an unofficial but accurate translation in English or in Russian of the documents.

Q. Can an applicant who is not from one of the eligible countries apply to ACP with a project that is to be implemented in one or more countries from ACP's target region? If this is possible, where and how should one apply?

A. Such applications will be evaluated case-by-case based on the scope and potential of the project to engage effectively with artists and cultural organizations from our target countries. In general, ACP prefers to support projects initiated by those living and working in the community where their proposed activity is to take place.

Applicants must submit their application to the ACP national coordinator of the country where the project will be implemented (see list of [national coordinators \(link to be inserted\)](#)). If more than one ACP target country is involved, applicants should submit their proposal to the national coordinator of the country where the largest part of the project will be implemented. For countries where ACP does not have a national coordinator, applicants should submit their application to the ACP program coordinator: dbolganschi@osi.hu.

Q. Is it possible to involve partners or collaborators who are not from one of the eligible countries?

A. Partners or collaborators in other countries may be included as participants in grant-supported activities.

Q. Can a governmental organization apply for an ACP grant (e.g. an organization funded by the Ministry of Culture)?

A. Yes.

Q. Is an organization eligible to apply if their general activities are not from the area of arts and culture (e.g. media, education, human rights, and minority rights)?

A. There should be a solid and clear alignment between the applicant organization, its work, and its ability to meet the goals it puts forward. A project that does not clearly reflect the applicant's organizational mission and is likely to shift the organization away from it has a low chance of being supported. Nevertheless, if an organization has the capacity and committed partners, ACP might consider such requests on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Is it an advantage to have partners involved in a project?

A. ACP encourages projects that draw together people, institutions, resources, and ideas that can best address the problems identified. ACP believes that partnerships can contribute to the success of a project in the sense that the presence of multiple stakeholders may increase the likelihood that a project will continue and become self-sustaining.

Q. Is it important that partners support a project financially or is it enough that they provide in-kind support?

A. Partners can support a project either financially or through in-kind contributions. What is important is that a partner makes a concrete contribution to the project. The applicant must include letters of support that specifically state how partners will support the project and whether that support is in-kind or monetary.

Q. Is it necessary to submit letters of intent from all partners involved in the project?

A. Letters of support should be submitted by all partners who make a concrete contribution to the project.

Q. For festivals, is it necessary to have letters of intent from each participant or only from the key participants?

A. ACP requires letters of intent from main participants in an event. Bio sketches of key event guests and staff members should also be presented. Bio sketches of staff members who provide leadership for various project components should state which position each staff member will hold, and describe credentials (skills and jobs held) that relate to the topic and scope of the project.

Q. Is it possible to submit supplemental documents after the application has been received?

A. As a general rule, all supplemental documents must be submitted together with the application. ACP will accept supplemental documents (e.g., letters of intent, letters of support, certificates) that were pending at the time the proposal was submitted.

Q. Is it necessary to specify in the application the period of the project?

A. Yes, the project period is necessary in order to evaluate the scope and feasibility of implementing project activities in the timeframe specified.

Q. Can the exact beginning and end date of the project be specified only after a decision regarding funding has been made by ACP?

A. Yes

Q. Does ACP provide post-funding for projects that already have taken place by the time the application is evaluated?

A. No, ACP does not provide post-financing.

Q. Is it possible to choose two activities for one project, letting ACP decide in which of the two the project fits best?

A. No. It is up to each organization or individual to decide whether a proposed project fits within the guidelines, and with which activity it is most closely aligned. Applicants who are unsure about the choice of activity should consult with ACP staff before submitting an application.

Q. Is it possible to apply for two activities at once with two different projects?

A. No. Only one application at a time will be accepted for evaluation.

Q. What are the ACP selection criteria?

Applications will be evaluated according the following criteria:

- Relevance of the project to the aim and priorities of the Call.
- Quality of the project, including:
 - Clarity of goals and tasks
 - Coherence of overall project design
 - Relevance to strategically chosen needs of the target beneficiaries
 - Impact on the project's target beneficiaries; sizes and types of audiences served
 - Feasibility of the activities proposed
 - Capability and capacity of human and institutional resources
 - Community and educational outreach component
 - Expected results, long-term value
 - Sustainability and potential follow-up activities
- Accuracy of project budget, availability of sponsors, in-kind contribution
- References and supporting letters

Q. Can applications be submitted for degree programs and/or related travel?

A. ACP does not support projects that lead to or are related to an academic degree.

Q. What ACP does not fund?

A. ACP does not provide funding for the following items and activities:

- Feature film production
- Publication (except if part of a larger project)
- (Re)construction of buildings or other infrastructures
- General business investment schemes offering grants or loans
- Debt and debt service charges, fines, legal costs
- Exchange loss
- General business and employment services, where these do not form part of a larger project
- Religious activities
- Major equipment purchase (requests for the purchase of equipment are evaluated on a case by case basis)

Q. What are the main points that should be covered in the project summary?

A. The project summary should do the following:

- Briefly describe all major project activities
- Explain the need(s) that the project addresses
- Describe long-term and short-term goals
- Identify the services to be provided and the target beneficiaries who will benefit from them
- Describe the methodology used to evaluate the project

Q. What does “conditional approval” mean?

A. Conditional approval means that the evaluation process remains open, that no funding is secured at this stage, and the final amount of the grant is subject to further discussion. The project can be supported if certain components of the application are revised or additional documents are submitted by the indicated deadline.

Q. What is the deadline for submitting additional information in the event of conditional approval?

A. One month for administrative documents and content-related issues and three months for proof of additional funding.

Q. Can ACP or its mentors provide the applicants with a sample project proposal?

A. No, we consider proposals the intellectual property of the applicant and do not share them outside the program.

Q. What are the most common reasons for which a proposal is not funded?

A. ACP may decide not to fund a proposal for various reasons. The most common of these are that a proposal:

- Does not fall within the guidelines of activities that ACP supports
- Does not follow ACP's general grant-making guidelines
- Does not propose an effective strategy or efficient procedure for implementation
- Is more appropriately funded by another organization, either public or private
- Is not sustainable without reliance on ACP funding
- Is not likely to generate significant long-term impact
- Is similar to projects ACP is already funding and is likely to replicate similar initiatives.

Q. Can we use the Open Society Foundations logo?

A. Use of the Open Society Foundations logo must be approved in advance. Grantees may acknowledge Open Society Foundations support by including the phrase "Supported by the Open Society Arts and Culture Program" or mentioning "Open Society Foundations" in the list of donors.

Q. I have a different question. How can I get in touch with you?

A. If your question was not answered here, please e-mail dbolganschi@osi.hu and we will respond to your query as soon as possible.

Budget-FAQ

Q. Does ACP prefer a specific budget format?

A. Yes. Applicants must use the Budget Template ([link to be inserted](#)) attached to the Application Form wherein budget line items are presented by object classification rather than functional classification. The grantee must disclose the estimated number of full-time equivalents included in the amounts budgeted for salaries. A list of all funding sources for the project during the grant period is also required.

Q. Is it necessary to specify in the detailed budget the number of persons, locations, days, indirect costs, etc.?

A. Yes, all these details must be specified under Point 4 (Budget Justification) of the Application Form.

Q. How can applicants provide proof of their in-kind contribution?

A. ACP does not require formal proof of an applicant's in-kind contribution but assumes that prospective grantees will include in the budget only items that belong to them or to the organizations they represent.

Q. Can the in-kind contribution cover 20% of the total budget?

A. Yes.

Q. Is matching funding from other grant makers an obligatory condition for ACP funding?

A. No, with the exception of Turkey, where the 33% matching rule applies. However, ACP encourages its grantees to seek matching funds to diversify their funding base, since ACP believes that projects without a diversified funding base tend to be less sustainable.

Q. If an answer is pending from another funding source, would ACP still review the application?

A. Yes, however, ACP's final decision will be withheld until confirmation letters from pending funding sources have been submitted.

Q. Does ACP accept budget modifications after the project has been started?

A. Budget modifications for minor changes (up to 10% of the overall budget) are acceptable with the prior written approval of ACP. Substantial budgets changes are permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Will the approved amount be transferred in advance?

A. Yes, ACP exercises a pre-financing practice.

Q. Will the approved amount be transferred in one installment?

A. This depends on the timing of the project and on the overall amount of support. For projects of less than six months duration and grants of up to \$10,000, funds are generally transferred in a single installment.

Reports-FAQ

Q. Does ACP require specific reports?

A. ACP requires narrative and financial reports. A section of the grant agreement clearly outlines the reporting requirements. Detailed Guidelines for Narrative and Financial Reporting can be found on ACP's website ([link to be inserted](#)). Grantees must submit their narrative and financial report to ACP within 30 days of the termination of the grant period. Standard reporting forms for project support grants will be sent to the applicant along with the approval notification of the grant.

For short-term grants we require a final report (which consists of a narrative and financial report) at the end of the grant period; for more complex and multi-year grants we require an interim report at a mutually agreed point of the project period and at the end of each year, and a final report at the end of the grant period. The sequence and timing of reports may vary depending on the project period and the amount of the grant awarded.

The narrative report must include a summary of what was accomplished through the expenditure of funds, including a description of progress made toward achieving the goals of the project. In the financial report, the grantee must account for the budget approved by ACP. The report must also include a summary of all funding received for the project (listed by source, amount, and grant period).

ACP reviews the reports and accepts them, rejects them, or refers them back to the applicant with a request for further information. If the reports are approved, ACP closes the grant. If the reports are rejected, no further funding will be awarded to the grantee.

Q. Does ACP prefer a specific Financial Report format?

A. Yes. Applicants must use the Financial Report Template ([link to be inserted](#)) wherein budget line items follow the structure of the approved budget.

Q. What happens if the supported project is only partially carried out?

A. The grantee should reimburse ACP for all unspent funds.

Q. What happens if the grantee fails to submit the required narrative and financial reports or refund to ACP?

A. ACP will send overdue notices to the grantee. If continued attempts to receive the required reports fail, ACP will close the grant as unsatisfactory. All payments will be suspended and the organization or individual will no longer be eligible to receive grants from ACP.

Q. What happens if an interim report from the grantee is late?

A. If an interim report is late, the next payment on the grant will be delayed until the interim report has been received and approved.

Q. Will ACP staff or external evaluators monitor the implementation of the project?

A. Depending on the scale of the project, both ACP staff and external evaluators might be involved in monitoring supported projects.

Q. For how long should we keep the original documentation of the supported project?

A. Grantees are required to keep in their administration records documentation such as copies of receipts, tickets, flyers, invoices, copies of financial reports, and other communication-related information for at least five years. ACP reserves the right to perform an audit during this time period.

Activity 1: Cultural Production

Q. Are only collaborative projects eligible?

A. No, individual projects can be submitted as well, but priority will be given to collaborative initiatives.

Q. What makes a production collaborative?

A. Collaboration may be transnational, meaning that a production is developed with two or more partner organizations from different countries. Collaboration may also be transversal, i.e., designed and implemented by organizations that work in different fields, for example, arts, culture, social cohesion, education, life-long learning, or development.

Q. What kind of contribution is eligible on behalf of the partners?

A. A partner's contribution can be in-kind (know-how or services) or consist of direct/indirect financial support.

Q. Can a collaborative production involve artists from countries that are not from the ACP target region?

A. Yes.

Q. Can a collaborative production involve touring and presentation in collaborating countries?

A. Yes, this is type of activity is strongly encouraged by ACP.

Q. Can the preparation or development of a collaborative production take place elsewhere than in the home country?

A. Yes.

Q. Is a production the property of the artist(s) or of Open Society Foundations if the project received funding from ACP?

A. The artists remain in full possession of their authors' rights.

Activity 2: Cultural Platforms

Q. What is considered a cultural platform?

A. Festivals, concerts, workshops, professional meetings, and public events organized either by autonomous organizations or public institutions all qualify as cultural platforms. A platform is aimed at supporting and stimulating creative initiatives and work. It aims at fostering creativity, detecting, discovering, defining, shaping the field, contributing to its development, and, in sum, contributing to materialization of a particular artistic or maybe broader – cultural trend.

Q. For public events funded by ACP, is the grantee allowed to sell tickets, or must admission be free of charge?

A. ACP does not require grantees to offer free admission to events it organizes, however, offering discounted prices for community groups with limited or no access to cultural events is highly encouraged.

Activity 3: Professional Development and Capacity Building

Q. What is the difference between professional development and capacity-building grants?

A. Professional development grants are intended for individuals, typically to support a specific project. Capacity-building grants are intended for organizations, typically to support a development program that extends for 3-5 years.

Q. What are professional development grants?

A. Professional development grants provide opportunities for professionals working in any domain of cultural management, cultural policy, or artistic production to expand their knowledge and skills through a project or production involving travel. Funds may be requested for participation in conferences, seminars, courses, and training workshops as well as curatorial research, cultural documentation, and other forms of research and development leading to the production of artistic work. Applicants should clearly explain how the proposed project will advance their professional development.

Q. What support is available?

A. Eligible expenses include travel, conference/seminar/course fees, and modest living expenses for the duration of the stay indicated in the application. Research projects are supported only if the project has been well planned, will utilize sound research methodology, and promises to produce meaningful results.

Q. Who is eligible to apply?

A. Eligible applicants are professionals working in any domain of cultural management, cultural policy, or artistic production; and artists who are residents in one of the eligible countries. Applications must be made in the name of an individual artist. Applicants who intend to apply as an "artist team," i.e., applications made in the name of collectives, companies, bands, groups and ensembles will not be considered unless their eligibility has been verified and confirmed by ACP prior to the submission of an application. Projects that seek support for activities related to or leading to an undergraduate or graduate degree program are not eligible for support.

Q. For applications that request funding for capacity building, is it necessary to submit a three-year strategy?

A. Yes, a three-year strategy is essential.

Q. Are the three year strategic plan and the project proposal one document or two separate documents?

A. A three-year strategic plan is a complementary component of the project proposal and must be submitted as one document.

Q. Is it possible to invite foreign experts to lead trainings or organize public events?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it possible to request funds for salaries and technical equipment?

A. Requests for salaries and technical equipment are accepted on a case by case basis.

Q. Are there non-eligible items for capacity building grants?

A. Non-eligible items are the same as for other grants.

Q. What are the selection criteria for professional development grants?

A. Applications will be assessed according to the following selection criteria:

- i. Overall excellence of the applicant's art or research work. Applicants should demonstrate exceptional talent and have an outstanding and proven track record in the field of arts and culture;
- ii. Appropriateness of the applicant's artistic or professional skills to the proposed project activity. The project should build on the applicant's professional knowledge, training, and experience. ACP's assessment will draw on supplemental documents such as letters of support and the applicant's biographical statement;
- iii. A project design that addresses important needs in the education and training of professionals working in a domain of cultural management, cultural policy, or artistic production. This criterion is used to assess the benefit of the project to the cultural sector, the community, and the wider public;
- iv. Impact of the proposed project on the applicant's professional practice;
- v. Applicant's ability to meet the project's objectives;
- vi. Reasonableness of the work plan and budget.

Mentoring assistance

Q. What is mentoring assistance?

A. Mentoring assistance is a short-term consultation offered by ACP mentors to local NGOs or individuals interested in applying to the Arts and Culture Program for the purpose of developing well-designed project proposals.

Q. Who are the mentors?

A. Mentors are usually in-country arts and culture specialists who are well acquainted with the local cultural landscape, cultural actors, and socio-economic conditions.

Q. Is mentoring compulsory?

A. No, mentoring assistance is by no means compulsory.

Q. Is mentoring assistance free of charge?

A. Yes.

Q. Are mentored applications prioritized?

A. No.

Q. What kind of services will mentors provide?

A. ACP mentors provide the following assistance:

- Short-term consultation for local NGOs or individuals interested in applying to the Arts and Culture Program for the purpose of developing well-designed project proposals;
- Short-term or ongoing assistance to beneficiary organizations and individuals at any time during their grant period. The focus of mentoring can vary from providing technical assistance with project management and financial reporting to addressing issues of project content and design, or unanticipated contingencies.

Q. How can one apply for mentoring service?

A. Approved applicants will be individually informed about mentoring assistance. Interested applicants will be put in contact with the national mentor.