

ST2 Support for Organisations Active at European Level in the Field of Culture (strand 2)

Note that **VII.1** at the end of each heading refers to the relevant chapter in the official **Programme Guide**

1. Introduction **VII.1**

The purpose of this *strand* is to co-finance expenditure relating to the long-term work programme of organisations pursuing an aim of general European interest in the field of culture or an objective forming part of the EU policy in this area.

Three categories of organisations are eligible under this *strand*. An organisation can only apply under one of those categories.

2. Three Categories **VII.1.1**

a) Ambassadors (55% of budget)

Organisations which, through their influence in the cultural field at European level, have clear potential to be European "representatives" of European culture and, as such, can fulfil their role of European Cultural Ambassadors.

The organisations particularly referred to in this category are orchestras, choirs, theatre groups and dance companies whose activities have a real European dimension. The organisation's activities must be carried out in at least seven *eligible countries*.

b) Advocacy Networks (40% of budget)

Advocacy networks entrusted with this responsibility by the associated members of the network and which ensure a significant representation of a specific category or specific categories of cultural operators or cultural fields at a European level. The networks must have been in existence for at least one year.

The networks should gather members which are legally established in at least fifteen *eligible countries*. Alternatively, when networks are composed of organisations representing cultural operators at national level (such as national federations) the network shall reach a substantial representation in at least ten *eligible countries*.

c) Structured Dialogue Platforms (restricted) (5%)

In the framework of the European Agenda for Culture, support can be provided for organisations actively engaging in a structured dialogue with the European Commission as well as to groupings developing policy analysis supporting the objectives of this Agenda, and more particularly with the five priority areas for action for the period 2008-2010 endorsed at European level by the Council.

The five priorities are:

- improving the conditions for the mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural field;
- promoting access to culture, especially through the promotion of cultural heritage, cultural tourism, multilingualism, digitisation, synergies with education (in particular arts education) and greater mobility of collections;

- developing data, statistics and methodologies in the cultural sector and improving their comparability;
- maximising the potential of cultural and creative industries, in particular that of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs);
- promoting and implementing the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

This category is strictly restricted to structured-dialogue platforms established further to specific calls for expression of interest published by the Commission and that comply with the specifications related to those calls. The platforms concerned will be invited to apply by the Agency.

The platforms comprise bodies from civil society engaged in a structured dialogue with the Commission in the framework of the European Cultural Agenda. They must respond to specific criteria, policy priorities and themes defined by the Commission in each of the calls for expression of interest referred to above.

The platforms shall be composed of non-governmental organisations active in the cultural field (such as networks, foundations, professional organisations) at a European level. Members of the platform must collectively represent cultural operators and other organisations established in at least fifteen *countries taking part in the Programme*.

If the platform as such does not possess legal personality, a member organization must be mandated in writing to represent it and coordinate its work programme (*see #5 below for more details*).

3. Annual or Multi-annual Support

Organisations can choose to apply for either:

a) an annual operating grant (every year until 2012)

Organisations may submit an application for an annual operating grant every year until the end of the Programme (please see **Info-Sheet ALL**). Organisations which receive a multi-annual grant through a partnership do not have to apply for an annual grant for the duration of the partnership. For example, an organisation which receives a multi-annual grant for 3 years from 2008 to 2010 does not have to apply for the years 2009 or 2010.

b) a partnership (for three years, 2011- 2013)

Organisations wishing to establish a long-term cooperation relationship with the Executive Agency are invited to submit an application for a partnership. The next application date for such a partnership is 2010. The partnership formalises the organisation's relationship with the Executive Agency for 3 years, from 2011 - 2013, to enable it to achieve its long-term objectives.

Organisations that wish to apply for a partnership should submit in addition to a detailed annual work programme for the first 12 months (i.e. 2011) a **three-year action plan** setting out the

objectives, priorities and expected results (achievements) for the period 2011–2013 as well as the strategy and the actions to be implemented to ensure that the objectives and results are achieved. The action plan should provide in particular for a breakdown of the objectives/results and actions for each of the three years.

In 2011 and 2012, the selected organisation will, at the request of the Executive Agency, submit a simplified application for a grant with a detailed work programme and the corresponding budget for 2012 and 2013. The work programme agreed on jointly by the two parties will serve as the basis for the award of the specific operating grant for the relevant year.

If the same organisation decides in 2010 to submit applications under the two options a) and b) described above, and if these two applications are both selected, priority will be given to the partnership.

4. Deadlines **VII.2**

- Annual operating grants: applications are possible every year up to 2012 – **deadline 15 September each year**.
- Framework partnerships: one deadline: **15 September 2010**.

5. Who is eligible to apply? **VII.3**

Eligible organisations must:

- be a public or private, independent organisation having legal personality. International, national, regional or local 'public authorities', such as municipalities, provinces or regions, are ineligible, as are natural persons;
- have their registered office in one of the *eligible countries*;
- be a non-profit-making organisation;
- have a legal mandate in the field of culture, in other words be pursuing an aim of general European interest in the field of culture or an objective forming part of the policy of the EU in that field;
- have submitted only one application for an annual operating grant per deadline. If an organisation submits more than one application for an annual operating grant, they will all be considered to be ineligible.

Ambassadors must:

- have possessed legal personality for at least two years on the date on which the application was submitted;
- pursue their activities in at least seven countries taking part in the Programme;

Advocacy networks must:

- have possessed legal personality for at least one year on the date on which the application was submitted;
- form a network of members legally established in at least 15 countries taking part in the Programme;
- form a network of members legally established in at least ten countries taking part in the Programme in cases where networks comprise organisations representing national cultural operators.

Structured-dialogue platforms must:

- have been established further to a specific call for expression of interest published by the Commission and comply with the specifications related to those calls. The platforms concerned will be invited to apply by the Agency.
- comprise non-governmental organisations active in the culture field at a transnational European level;
- comprise members collectively representing European operators and other organisations established in at least 15 countries taking part in the Programme.
- be legally established **or**
- be represented by a member organisation legally established and duly mandated by the chair of the platform to submit the application, represent the platform in the framework of the selection process and coordinate the grouping (the mandate must be signed by the chair of the platform);

Three platforms currently fulfil the above criteria.

The activities to be taken into consideration in the calculation of the grant are those which relate to the permanent activities of the

organisation and which are relevant to the objectives of the Culture Programme and to the structured dialogue with the Commission as specified in the calls for expression of interest. The work programme will therefore cover only such activities. Consequently, any supplementary or *ad hoc* project which does not meet these criteria or which is already covered by a European or other grant will not be part of the work programme. Moreover, activities that generate costs in countries not taking part in the Programme must not account for more than 15% of the total cost of implementing the work programme (see **InfoSheet FIN**).

6. What are the Award Criteria? **VII.4**

Awarding a grant is not only dependent on assessment of the eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria (see **InfoSheet FIN**). The final selection decision will be determined on the basis of the type of proposal submitted (annual operating grant or partnership) assessed on the basis of the *award criteria*.

In the case of applications for

1. an **annual operating grant**, the selection decision will be taken on the basis of the content and impact of the detailed work programme for the financial year in question;
2. a **partnership**, the selection decision will be taken on the basis of the content and impact of the **three-year action plan (2011-2013)** and the **detailed annual work programme for 2011 and its consistency** with the organisation's three-year action plan, against the *award criteria* defined below.

The *award criteria* are as follows:

1. the extent to which the work programme and the subsequent activities can generate a real **European added value** as well as the **European dimension of the proposed activities**
2. the relevance of the work programme and subsequent activities to the **specific objectives** of the Programme
3. the extent to which the proposed work programme and the subsequent activities are designed and can be carried out successfully with a high **level of excellence**
4. the extent to which the proposed work programme and subsequent activities can produce **outputs** which reach as many people as possible, both directly and indirectly
5. the extent to which the results of proposed activities will be appropriately **communicated** and **promoted**
6. the extent to which the activities can generate an appropriate level of **sustainability** (long-term results and cooperation) and also to act as multipliers to other possible promoters

6.1 Common award criteria for all four categories

Excellence of proposed cultural activities (criterion 3, 0-20 points)

The extent to which the proposed work programme and the subsequent activities are designed and can be carried out successfully with a high level of excellence. Proposals not only have to meet the criteria and the objectives of the Culture Programme, but also have to be carried out to a high standard. In this respect, the following factors will be assessed:

- The skills and experience of the persons in charge of the management and implementation of activities;
- The relevance of the proposed activities in terms of representing European culture at its highest level, the impact on both the European audience and the general public and the social dimension of the activities;
- The clarity of the proposed activities and their consistency with the *operational* and *financial capacity* of the organisation;
- The quality of the application and the budget and the estimated level of expenditure; the seriousness and completeness of the application, clarity and relevance of proposed methodology, clarity of the project description in terms of objectives and activities;
- outputs and detailed nature of the budget breakdown in the case of applications for budget-based grants.

Communication and promotion of activities (criterion 5, 0-15 points)

The results of proposed activities have to be appropriately disseminated and promoted. In this respect, the following factors will be assessed:

- The relevance of the communication plan with respect to the type of the activity and the target audience;
- In the case of applications for budget-based grants, the

relevance and adequacy of the budget assigned to the communication / dissemination / promotion plan with regard to the expected direct and indirect impact;

- The methodology used to ensure the visibility of the proposed activities, the detailed communication / dissemination / promotion plan and the various promotional tools used, such as website, press, brochures and radio.

Sustainability (criterion 6) (0-5 points)

The activities of the cultural organisations are supposed to generate the greatest possible long-term results and cooperation, and also to act as multipliers for other possible promoters. In this respect, the following factors will be assessed:

- The extent to which the experience gained by the implementation of past and recent activities ensured a long term sustainability with a real European added value;
- The potential of the proposed activities to result in continued, sustained cooperation, in complementary activities or in permanent benefits at European level, and to contribute on a long-term basis to the development of cooperation between cultures in Europe;
- The potential of the proposed activities to generate other future initiatives which aim to promote international mobility of people working in the cultural sector, to encourage supranational circulation of cultural and artistic works and products and to encourage dialogue between cultures.

6.2 Additional specific criteria for each category

a) Ambassadors:

European added value and European dimension of the proposed activities (criterion 1, 0-20 points)

The following factors will be assessed:

- How the objectives, methodology and nature of the proposed activities demonstrate an outlook that goes beyond local, regional or even national interests to work towards an aim of representing general European interest in the field of culture;
- The extent to which the proposed activities may have a greater effect and their objectives can be better achieved at European level than at national level;
- The extent to which the organisation through the influence of its activities at a European level, fulfils the role of European Cultural 'Ambassador' and, as such, its aptitude to be a real "representative" of European culture;
- The extent to which the planned activities are designed to nurture this European dimension.

Relevance to the specific objectives of the Programme (criterion 2, 0-20 points)

The extent to which the proposed activities contribute to the mobility of people and works and contribute to intercultural dialogue, will be assessed.

Expected level of outputs (criterion 4, 0-15 points)

The following factors will be assessed:

- The number of persons who might benefit directly and indirectly from the results of the proposed activities;
- The number of European countries that will benefit from the proposed activities including the number of countries, sites and venues that will host the activities;
- The number of associates and sectors that may be effectively and permanently represented at European level.

b) Advocacy networks:

European added value and European dimension of the proposed activities (criterion 1, 0-20 points)

The following factors will be assessed:

- How the objectives, methodology and nature of the proposed activities demonstrate an outlook that goes beyond local, regional or even national interests to work towards an aim of networking, providing advocacy and establishing structured dialogue in the general European interest in the field of culture;
- The extent to which the proposed activities may have a greater effect and their objectives be better achieved at European level than at national level;
- The extent to which the applicant network represents bodies active in *eligible* or *Third Countries* and disseminates information on the activity of the EU, more particularly in

order to promote European cultural cooperation;

- The extent to which the planned activities are designed to nurture this European dimension.

Relevance to the specific objectives of the Programme (criterion 2, 0-20 points)

The extent to which the advocacy and dialogue activities can contribute to structuring and nurturing debates on the development of a European shared cultural area and give a stronger voice to the cultural field in Europe at both the sectoral and individual levels, will be assessed.

Expected level of outputs (criterion 4, 0-15 points)

The following factors will be assessed:

- The number of persons who might benefit directly and indirectly from the results of the activities proposed;
- The number of different European countries that will benefit from the proposed activities, including the number of different countries, sites and venues that will host the activities;
- The number of associates and sectors that may be represented at European level and the expected results of contacts with the Institutions of the EU.

c) Structured Dialogue Platforms:

European added value and European dimension of the proposed activities (criterion 1, 0-20 points)

The following factors will be assessed:

- how each of the member of the platform contributes through its network and experience of cultural policies to diversifying and enlarging the perspective of the platform on the thematic priority defined in the call for expression of interest;
- how the objectives, methodology and nature of the proposed activities demonstrate an outlook that goes beyond local, regional or even national interests to work towards an aim of better understand the impact of cultural policies in the general European interest;
- the extent to which the proposed activities may have a greater impact and their objectives be better achieved at European level than at national level;
- the extent to which communication activities related to the dissemination of results can reach out to interested stakeholders at European level.

Relevance to the specific objectives of the Programme (criterion 2, 0-20 points)

The following factors will be assessed:

- the relevance of the proposed activities to contribute to the structured dialogue with the Commission on the theme specified in the call for expression of interest.
- the extent to which the proposed activities can contribute to structuring and nurturing policy debates on the development of a European shared cultural area, and particularly on the objectives of the European Cultural Agenda, will be assessed

Expected level of outputs (criterion 4, 0-15 points)

The following factors will be assessed:

- the number of consultation processes and recommendations which may result from the work of the platform.
- the number of actors and organisations who might benefit directly and indirectly from the results of the proposed activities.

7. Financial Issues

7.1 Co-Financing VII.5

The rate of EU co-financing may not exceed 80% of the operating cost in respect of the submitted work programme.

As a consequence, at least 20% of the total operating budget of the organisation must be co-financed from other sources.

7.2 Limitation of the Budget Increase Compared to Previous Budget Years VII.5.1

To ensure a transparent allocation of the budget available for operating grants to organisations active at European level in the field of culture and in order to avoid unjustified inflation of the budget, the principle of limiting expenditure estimates in relation to previous *financial years* is applied.

The estimated expenditure on the implementation of the work programme may not increase by more than 10% the actual expenditure incurred during year $n-2$, or else it will be capped at this level. The estimated expenditure is assessed against the profit and loss account for that year.

If the actual expenditure incurred in the year preceding the last year for which accounts have been closed (year $n-3$) was higher than in year $n-2$, the limitation of the provisional budget may be calculated by using $n-3$ as the reference year. This rule applies for annual as well as Multi-annual Operating Grants.

7.3 Maximum Thresholds **VII.5.2**

Without prejudice to the maximum 80% co-financing rule, or to the provisions of the Financial Regulation, the grant requested by each applicant must not exceed the following scales defined for each category:

a) Ambassadors:

Estimated expenditure on implement'n of the work programme	Maximum grant amount
under EUR 100.000	EUR 75.000
From EUR 100.000 to EUR 149.999	EUR 80.000
From EUR 150.000 to EUR 199.999	EUR 120.000
From EUR 200.000 to EUR 299.999	EUR 160.000
From EUR 300.000 to EUR 449.999	EUR 240.000
From EUR 450.000 to EUR 799.999	EUR 360.000
From EUR 800.000 to EUR 1.200.000	EUR 480.000
above EUR 1.200.000	EUR 600.000

b) Advocacy networks and c) Platforms:

Estimated expenditure on implement'n of the work programme	Maximum grant amount
under EUR 100.000	EUR 75.000
From EUR 100.000 to EUR 150.000	EUR 80.000
above EUR 150.000	EUR 120.000

7.4 Gradual Decrease of Operating Grants (degressivity rule) **VII.5.3**

In accordance with Article 113(2) of the Financial Regulation, operating grants shall be gradually decreased when they are renewed. This rule is applied as follows: where the co-financing rate exceeds 5%, the co-financing rate for year n will be one percentage point lower than the rate for year $n-1$. A 60% rate in year n is therefore reduced to 59% in year $n+1$. Where the co-financing rate is 5% or lower, the co-financing rate for year n will be reduced by 5% of the co-financing rate for year $n-1$. Example A: a co-financing rate of 5% for year n is reduced to 4.75% for year $n+1$. Example B: a rate of 4% for year n falls to 3.8% in year $n+1$. The same rule applies over the three years of a framework partnership agreement.

7.5 How the Grant is Calculated **VII.6**

For the calculation of the operating grant, applicant organisations can choose between two systems as outlined below.

7.5.1 Budget Based Financing **VII.6.2**

The amount of the grant is calculated on the basis of a balanced, detailed forecast budget, expressed in EUR for the implementation of the proposed work programme for each budgetary year. The information a budget should contain as well as the definition of *eligible costs* is described in **Info-Sheet FIN** "Budget based financing". The rules as described above apply: limitation of the growth of the budget, grant ceilings, degressivity and no-profit rules.

7.5.2 Flat Rate Based Financing **VII.6.1**

General provisions

Under this system, the grant is calculated on the basis of a fixed amount per staff member employed by the organisation on a full and / or part-time basis for the purpose of implementing the proposed work programme up to a defined ceiling. It covers all persons working on the implementation of the work programme proposed by the organization, such as managerial, secretarial and auxiliary staff on its payroll, but excludes subcontractors, volunteers and persons on practical training courses.

Musicians and other artists may be included in the calculation even if they are not formally staff members and receive only a per diem allowance and/or reimbursement of travel costs. The grant calculated in this way is deemed to cover all of the organisation's operating costs up to the prescribed ceiling.

The organisation may use the grant to implement the proposed annual work programme without being limited by pre-defined budget heading thresholds, which provides more flexibility.

The Executive Agency bases the calculation of the grant on the actual number of these staff members employed by the organisation in the year for which the organisation receives the grant. Organisations have to prove the number of staff at the end of the *financial year* in a certificate endorsed by an approved auditor. They must also submit their annual accounts, which are to be certified in cases where the grant is EUR 100 000 or more.

Calculation of the grant amount

The applicant organisation bases the calculation of the grant on the number of person/years assigned to the implementation of the work programme. It can define the number of staff using the total number of staff days and divide them by 220 (no of working days / year).

1 year = 220 working days; 1 working day = at least 7,5 hours

Only the working days of persons certified in the audit certificate described above can be included in the final calculation of the grant.

The flat rate is variable depending on the country in which the organisation is based reflecting cost levels in each country. The flat rate to be applied is that of the country where the organisation has its main activities, which is defined as the country where at least 50% of the permanent staff of the organisation works. Usually this is the headquarters. **In the UK, the flat rate is 38.333 euros.**

*More information on this area, including an explanation of the **automatic grant calculator** contained in the application form, and an example of the grant calculation, can be found in the official Programme Guide.*

8. Payment Arrangements **VII.7**

8.1 Pre-financing **VII.7.1**

A pre-financing payment, as defined in the *Grant Agreement* will be transferred to the beneficiary within 45 days of the date when the Executive Agency signs the *Grant Agreement* and all the requested guarantees are received.

8.2 Interim Payment **VII.7.2**

An interim payment is intended to reimburse the *beneficiary* for expenditure on the basis of a detailed statement of the costs incurred once the action has reached a sufficient level of completion as defined in the relevant *Grant Agreement*. It may clear all or part of any pre-financing.

8.3 Final Payment **VII.7.3**

The Executive Agency shall establish the amount of the final payment on the basis of the final report. Full information on the Final report is contained within the official Programme Guide.

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