

Visual Arts

Biennials Connect Grants

Application Toolkit

Updated 20 June 2025

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1. What are Biennials Connect grants?

Biennials Connect grants support visual artists participation in UK and international festivals and biennials.

Our Biennials Connect grants directly benefit artists through biennial partners by facilitating opportunities for travel, the production of new work, networking, skills building and showcasing.

The Biennials Connect programme promotes cross-cultural exchange and collaboration by providing opportunities for artists and biennials to connect, collaborate and build meaningful partnerships across the globe.

Application deadline: 14th September 2025, 11:59pm BST

What can the grant be used for?

- We're awarding grants to enable biennials and festivals in the UK to support international visual artists participation and international biennials and festivals in eligible countries to support UK visual artist participation.
- Visual arts organisations which are neither biennials or festivals can apply if they partner with a biennial or festival. We encourage UK and international biennials and festivals to partner on applications – for example, by co-commissioning an artist. If you are considering making a joint application, we encourage you to speak to the Visual Arts team in advance, please email visual.arts@britishcouncil.org.
- This grant is for biennial and festival organisations to specifically support travel, artwork production, networking, professional development and skills building activities, or public programme for artists such as residencies and events as well as access requirements.
- The lead applicant must be a biennial or festival based in the UK or internationally, or art organisations partnering with a biennial or festival, not individual artists.
- Activity may take place online and/or in person.

- If face-to-face activity is planned, you must follow latest guidance provided by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office for the relevant country/countries: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.
- Core activity should take place from February 2026 – February 2027. The final activity must take place before the end of February 2027.
- Final reports and evaluations must be shared before the end of February 2027. Audience figures must be shared before the end of the quarter your activity ends in. For example, if your final activity takes place in April 2026, you would share audience figures before the end of June 2026 (Q2 End). You can view the evaluation and audience figure reporting frameworks in *Further Resources* below.

Priority will be given to projects which:

- Fosters collaboration between UK-based and international artists, curators, arts organisations and / or festivals and biennials.
- Involve visual artists in the early- or -mid stages of their career.
- We are particularly interested in applications by biennial or festival organisations supporting artists whose practice is collaborative, cross-cultural or community based.
- Are initiated by or engaging with organisations and artists based in countries which are Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients. These projects can apply for grants of up to £9,500. We expect to award up to 8 grants to ODA related projects.
- A limited number of grants will be available for projects not engaging with ODA recipient countries (non-ODA). These projects can apply for grants up to £5,000. We expect to award up to 2 grants to non-ODA related projects.

Grant amount available**Apply for up to £9,500:**

- UK biennials/festivals collaborating with visual artists and/or organisations based in ODA* countries
- International biennials/festivals based in ODA* countries collaborating with visual artists and/or organisations in the UK

Apply for up to £5,000:

- UK biennials/festivals collaborating with visual artists and/or organisations based in non-ODA* countries
- International biennials/festivals based in non-ODA* countries collaborating with visual artists and/or organisations in the UK

* International biennials/festivals must be based in eligible countries. The full list of eligible countries and further explanation on Official Development Assistance (ODA) can be found below.

You can apply for up to an additional £2,500 for project access costs. Project access costs are about removing cost barriers so that d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people can create the project. These might include, but are not limited to sign language interpreters, captioners, or personal assistants for disabled artists or producers.

2. Access

If you need this information in any other format or if you need to make your application in another format, please email visual.arts@britishcouncil.org.

Access support is available for Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people who experience barriers when applying for grants.

It is also for those experiencing poor short or long-term physical or mental health.

If you require access support to make your application, please email visual.arts@britishcouncil.org.

Please see above for information on project access costs.

3. Eligibility

Organisations applying must:

- Be one of the following:
 - UK biennials or festivals supporting international visual artists' participation
 - international biennials or festivals supporting visual artists' participation from the UK
 - or other visual arts organisations collaborating with a biennial/festival.
- Be based in the UK or an eligible international country (please see the full list of eligible countries below).
- Be primarily a visual art biennial or festival. Multi-arts biennials and festivals can apply but they must demonstrate a focus on visual arts within their programme.
- Be supporting artists over the age of 18. If artist travel is included in the project, the artists must be able to travel internationally on valid passports (organisations must arrange travel, transport, accommodations, insurance and visas themselves).
- Be supporting artists you have either not previously worked with or supporting new projects with artists you have worked with before.
- Share the [British Council's commitment](#) to Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and will embed best EDI practices into the activity.
- Share the British Council's commitment to paying artists fairly and will ensure artists are fairly compensated for their participation.
- Applications by individual artists will not be eligible.

- The core activity or biennial/festival presentation may take place from February 2026. The final activity and evaluation must take place before February 2027. Project proposals should have a timeline ending no later than February 2027.
- Grant applications can be made for projects involving multiple artists, but only one application per biennial organisation can be submitted.
- Festivals can receive a maximum of one Biennials Connect Grant per edition. If you received a grant for a previous or current festival, you can apply and receive another for a forthcoming festival but you cannot receive multiple grants in one festival edition.

If you need any clarifying of the above ahead of applying, please email visual.arts@britishcouncil.org.

Eligible Countries

Applications to Biennials Connect grants are open to **UK and international** biennials/festivals and art organisations.

International biennials/festivals must be based in eligible countries. The full list of eligible international countries is below.

Recipients of Official Development Assistance (ODA)*

Americas: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Venezuela and Peru

East Asia: The mainland of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Viet Nam and Thailand

Middle East and North Africa: Egypt, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Algeria and Morocco

Sub-Saharan Africa: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Wider Europe: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

Non-ODA

East Asia: Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, and Korea

European Union: France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain

Middle East and North Africa: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Oman

*Official Development Assistance is UK taxpayers' money that supports aid and development in low- to middle-income countries. We deliver programmes that promote economic development and welfare in these countries which contribute to building friendly knowledge and understanding with the UK.

4. Application

[PLEASE APPLY ONLINE HERE](#)

You can download a full offline copy of the application form on the British Council website [HERE](#).

There are several sections to complete in the application. Unless questions include “(Optional)”, they are required. You must answer all required questions and be on or under all word counts to submit your application.

Application Sections are:

1. Quick Eligibility Check
2. Privacy Notice & Marketing
3. Partnership Details
4. Application Questions (see below)
5. Budget
6. Safeguarding
7. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Form – any information you supply in this form will not be accessed and will not inform any decision regarding your application.*
8. Declaration & Submission

Application Questions:

1. Please share a short summary of your planned project activity.
2. Please specify whether your activity will be delivered face-to-face, digitally or both.
3. Please outline the proposed project activity explaining how it will be delivered.
4. Provide a statement about the festival/biennial organisation and the planned programme across the festival.
5. Please outline how the activity will promote cross-cultural exchange and develop long term collaboration / partnerships.
6. Please explain how this grant will benefit your organisation.
7. Please explain how this grant will benefit the artist(s).
8. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) runs through our work around the world. Our goal is to develop inclusive programmes and projects that bring together people with different experiences and backgrounds. We hope this will make everyone's experiences richer, and ultimately lead to more inclusive societies. Please explain how your project aligns with our EDI goals. You can find details of our EDI strategy and policy listed below in *Further Resources*.

9. Provide a statement about the artist(s) and links to examples of their work. If you are selecting artists through an open call, please provide a description of the selection process, rationale and criteria.
10. Do you charge an entry or participation fee. If yes, how much is the fee?
11. Are you working directly with children (under 18), or with vulnerable adults? If so, please detail how you will be working with them and what Safeguarding measures you intend to put in place. You can find details of our Safeguarding Policy below in *Further Resources*.

And you must provide the following:

- A letter with names and signatures from representatives of each organisation and artist(s) confirming their participation.
- A schedule outlining how the project will be delivered, including key milestones.
- A risk assessment and mitigation plan
- Estimated audience engagement online and in person.
- A detailed budget outlining how the requested grant amount will be spent. Please include any support you will receive from other funders for this activity, including in kind support. If you are applying for up to an additional £2,500 for project access costs, please share a separate project access budget. Please review the Budget Guidance document before starting your application. This is accessible via the Biennials Connect Grants website [HERE](#).

If you have any questions, please contact: visual.arts@britishcouncil.org.

Information Sessions

Find out more about applying for our Biennials Connect grants through our Information Sessions.

- 9th July 2025, 9–10am BST [Register Here](#)
- 9th July , 3–4pm BST [Register Here](#)

5. Key Dates

Question and answer online sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9th July 2025, 9–10am BST Register Here
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9th July 2025 , 3–4pm BST Register Here
Application deadline	14 th September 2025, 11:59pm BST
Shortlisting decisions to be communicated to all applicants	Autumn 2025
Grant agreements signed payment initiated	December 2025
Core activity or biennial/festival presentation to take place between	February 2026 – February 2027
Evaluation/Reporting deadline	February 2027

6. Selection Process

The deadline for applications is 14th September 2025, 11:59pm BST.

No assessment will be made of the writing style. Applications will be assessed against answers to the application questions and eligibility requirements. They will be reviewed by a panel comprised of British Council Arts staff and external assessors.

Your project will be assessed on the strength of your application. Your application will also go through a due diligence process which it must pass before a grant can be awarded.

Successful applicants will be notified in Autumn 2025. All applicants will be contacted even if they have not been selected.

7. Further Resources

Below you can find further resources which we recommend you use when planning your activity and completing your application.

- Read the Budget Guidance via the Biennials Connect Grants website [HERE](#).
- Read the British Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Policy [here](#).
- Read the [British Council's Safeguarding Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct for events](#).

- Successful applicants are required to evaluate and report on activity to the British Council. You can download the evaluation framework and audience data collection forms on the Biennials Connect Grants website [HERE](#).

8. About British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We do this through our work in arts and culture, education and the English language. We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2024–25 we reached 599 million people.

About the Biennials Connect Grant

British Council Visual Arts has supported biennials through its Global Biennials Fund since 2016. This updated offer, Biennials Connect Grants, builds on the legacy work of the Global Biennials Fund. It has been devised as part of the Visual Arts global programme 'Biennials Connect'.

The grants will directly benefit artists through biennial partners by facilitating opportunities for travel, the production of new work, networking, skills building and showcasing. The programme promotes cross-cultural exchange and collaboration by providing opportunities for artists and biennials to connect, collaborate and build meaningful partnerships across the globe.

This programme will facilitate long-term, sustainable partnerships between curators and biennials based in the UK and across the globe.

You can read more about previous recipients of Biennials Connect grants [here](#).

We hope this toolkit is helpful. Good luck in preparing your application – we look forward to reading it. For enquiries, please email visual.arts@britishcouncil.org with the subject heading: Biennials Connect Grants – query.