
Terms of Reference – Festival Connect

April 2025

1. Background

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, and through broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. We work on the ground in more than 100 countries.

We use a Cultural Relations approach to this work. Cultural Relations are understood as reciprocal transnational interactions between two or more cultures (one of which is the UK), encompassing a range of activities conducted by state and/or non-state actors within the space of culture and civil society. The overall outcomes of cultural relations are greater connectivity, www.britishcouncil.org

better mutual understanding, more and deeper relationships, mutually beneficial transactions and enhanced sustainable dialogue between people and cultures, shaped through engagement and attraction rather than coercion.

2. Festival Connect

The Festival Connect Fund recognizes the transformative power of festivals to shaping communities, catalyse artistic innovation, social impact, and facilitate collaboration across Africa and beyond. The Festival Connect Fund is seeking submissions of grant proposals from festivals across various art forms such as Creative Technology, Film, Literature, Music, Theatre and Dance and/or Multidisciplinary arts.

Eligible countries are:

SSA: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

UK: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales

Festival Connect Aims

Festival Connect aims to

- create opportunities between SSA and UK festival peers that can lead to future creative collaboration, co-commissions and partnership projects
- support festival-making and artistic expressions, including community engagement during festivals that can lead to meaningful social impact.
- mobility for festivals and festival leaders within SSA and UK to promote professional development, cultural exchange, and presentation
- Build new cross-regional collaborations focused on access to market and the potential of festivals in bridging cultures in SSA and with the UK arts sector
- support the festival value chain, targeting tour-ready work, festival management and networks, including
- provide space for experimentation with creative technology (digital festivals included) to develop new experiences.

We encourage and support applications focused on the preservation, presentation and transmission of Sub-Saharan Africa's diverse cultural heritage through social inclusion, strengthening the resilient voice and agency of cultural practitioners and communities whilst promoting inclusive approaches that address gender equality.

Community engagement - we encourage artistic and cultural community engagement programmes/arts events alongside the festival with a focus on audiences between the ages 18-35.

All proposals must demonstrate a commitment to implementing sustainable practices that reduce the festival's environmental impact.

We expect the festivals we fund to help achieve our long-term goals (strategic outcomes), which include:

1. New festival partnerships and exchange are developed, and existing ones are strengthened between SSA and UK Festivals, artists, creators and managers.
2. Development of knowledge networks
3. Public engagement and access to international artists, creators, and researchers
4. SSA Festivals and speakers showcase their work with potential for future projects and networks
5. Ensuring that festivals can grow and sustain themselves over time by providing funding, skills development, and network-building opportunities

Who can access funding from the Festival Connect Fund:

SSA Festival Connect Fund targets festivals that have been in continuous operation for at least two editions (both in-person and digital eligible). Our festival grant will offer funding across one funding round for festivals to deliver a single-artform, or multidisciplinary arts, programme of festival events or activities.

Eligible Countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe in SSA and England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales in the UK.

Funding Available

A total of 100,000 GBP is available for Festivals across SSA based festivals targeted on collaborating, exchanging and showcasing in three tiers of scales – 5000 GBP, 10,000GBP, and 15,000 GBP

In its second year of iteration Festival Connect Fund targets festivals that have been in continuous operation for at least two editions (both in person and digital)

Previous Grantees of Festival Connect Fund are eligible to apply.

- As general guidance on budget breakdown, we recommend that festivals plan to describe core costs required to realise their Festival Connect proposal, including accounting for contributions to festival delivery, co-production and commissioning, festival support costs (administration and programme management) and an allocation to marketing.

Please describe any in-kind contributions and income expected to support your festival in different forms, eg sponsorship.

Assessment Criteria

Quality: The project proposal must be of a high artistic/creative quality, is innovative in its approach and is able to strongly demonstrate the ability of the project to continue beyond the year of (25%)

Management: The project proposal is well-planned and resourced and demonstrates equitable use of the budget between the named partners (25%)

Documentation and Communication: the project proposal includes a work plan with clear outputs/outcomes, Marketing Plan as well as evidence of a confirmed partnership with the corresponding applicant (25%)

Sustainability and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: The project proposal addresses equality, diversity, inclusion, and environmental sustainability (25%)

Total Scores 100%

2 Years Minimum iterations of your festival online or face to face

A Festival pitch deck is requested as part of the application – link rather than uploaded pdf

Festivals can apply for below activities including:

Tier 1 - up to 5000 GBP (maximum of 5 Festivals supported) 25,000 GBP

- a creative grant to bring your festival to life, support festival making and artistic expressions
- mobility with UK/SSA-SSA
- other associated activities including mobility and travel to support festival development, partnership building etc that support the festival programme
- Storytelling – Marketing and Communication

Tier 2 — up to 10000 GBP – maximum at Tier 3 x3 @ 30,000

- Festival or partner led proposals – UK/SSA-SSA designed for Festival to Festival or Partner to Partner exchange
- Mobility with UK/SSA-SSA
- Mentorship and coaching – apply for funds to support this describing mentorship/coaching opportunity – organisation to organisation can include hybrid digital/face to face.
- Storytelling Marketing and Communication

Tier 3 Festival Fund: 10,000 – 15000 GBP (Maximum of 3 Festivals supported) 45,000

- commissioning, co-production, exchange, development, or presentation of new or remounted work from across countries in Africa and internationally. These may include live/in-person and digital components.
- Mobility with UK/SSA-SSA
- The proposal must demonstrate a commitment to implementing sustainable practices that reduce the festival's environmental impact.
- Storytelling Marketing and Communication

All proposals must demonstrate a commitment to implementing sustainable practices that reduce the festival's environmental impact.

We are interested in Festivals engaging a range of audiences and numbers. Festivals must engage young people between 18 to 35-years through activities that are delivered face to face and online or that take on a hybrid approach, with a reach of at least:

- o 200 for face-to-face engagement
- o 500 for online engagement (excluding impressions)
- o 250 face-to-face and 250 online for hybrid engagement

FAQ's

What we won't fund

Non-arts festivals (e.g. food and wine festivals, wellness festivals, carnivals/parades) or arts activity within non-arts festivals

Is collaboration with a partner mandatory ?

Yes, all eligible applications need to have a partner – reflecting collaboration between SSA and the UK. The application also requires a letter of intent that is signed by both parties to further illustrate the intended partnership.

Festival Connect aims to support connections between festivals across SSA and the UK. Across the three grant tiers we encourage collaborations between Festivals and organisations in SSA and the UK including projects with individual artists and professionals or organisation.

SSA based festivals interested in collaborating with a UK partner are responsible for contacting and agreeing to collaborate with the UK partner. The British Council does not have a centralised directory of artists, and each festival is free to contact the artists or organisations they consider relevant to carry out the collaboration through which they will apply for funding.

We ask applicants to name their partner organisations. It is desirable to have the confirmation and commitment between counterpart Festivals and organisations at the time of the application, for which a letter of intent signed by both parties is requested as an option. Proposals with confirmed collaboration will be positively evaluated.

What kind of collaboration is required with partners to participate?

Partnerships will depend on the nature of the activity they wish to undertake within their festival. For illustrative purposes, the following is a list of projects that can be supported (this list is not exhaustive):

- Performance, concert, showcase or exhibition by artists.
- A presentation, talk, workshop, panel or training activity given by SSA/UK professionals
- Undertaking an artist residency with a SSA and or UK artist within the festival's framework.

Activities can be in a digital, face-to-face or hybrid format. The British guest can be involved in more than one activity within the festival, either alone or with other artists from other countries.

Administration tasks and deliverables

- Ensure British Council venue checklist, safeguarding policy and participant engagement surveys are completed and utilised for each event.

- Participate in project update meetings and monitoring and evaluation assessments as discussed and agreed by British Council during inception meeting.
- To build up an Arts contacts database comprising of the people engaged in the various activities as part of the project.
- Ensure all direct project participants and service providers are contracted and paid as per agreed service fees.
- Provide a detailed narrative report at the end of project, capturing the events outputs and outcomes, utilising British Council reporting template.
- Provide financial report end the of project.

The team should have

- Experience in curating and producing festivals for online and face-to-face delivery for diverse audiences.
- Be available to work primarily on this project between May 2025 and March 2026, subject to performance appraisals and audit at the end of each year. No
- Be able to submit financial and narrative reports every 6 months.
- Festival partner required to be committed to delivering results in a timely manner.
- The partner is required to maintain an alumni database of participants of the festival project.
- The partner is required to assign adequate human resource to the project for its duration.
- The partner is required to engage and participate in project management processes assigned by the British Council including the Monitoring and Evaluation, Communications and Audit partners for the duration of this project.
- The partner is required to learn and understand British Council safeguarding and inclusion standards that will be applied throughout the programme. See attached.
- The partner must ensure that any safeguarding incident, allegation, or any cause for concern is reported immediately to the Safeguarding lead in British Council.

4. Timing and Resources:

All the activities will need to be delivered to the timelines specified during inception meeting with very limited flexibility. Applicants will need to confirm their agreement to deliver to these dates and timelines for their applications to be considered.

Selected Partners will need to attend a joint inception planning meeting with all partners present (online/face-to-face) before the start of the programme and regular catch-up meetings as shall be agreed upon.

The available budgets items are not exhaustive but are pegged expenditure caps **per year**. Please itemize the budget according to your proposed concept note.

- i. Health and Safety: All venues provided for activity will need to comply with British Council Venue Assessment Checklist Requirements.
- ii. All partners will be required to procure their own insurance for travel and other activity in relation to the programme.
- iii. The partner is required to learn and understand British Council safeguarding and inclusion standards that will be applied throughout the programme.
- iv. The partner will need to plan and manage M&E activities and Communications activities and assign a responsible team member for each. The responsible team members will ensure that they liaise with the overall programme M&E consultants contracted by British Council, as well as ensure access for the M&E consultants to conduct interviews and observations of activity in the delivery of

their M&E consultancy. Additionally, if any interesting case studies and experiences come to the notice of the consultants, they will be required to share this with British Council.

In the delivery of the assignment, the partner will be required to consider the following:

- v. Diversity: All case studies and materials used for the programme will be in line with British Council equality and diversity approach as outlined at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/how-we-work/equality-diversity-inclusion>
- vi. Adult safeguarding and Child Protection: All case studies and materials used for the programme will be in line with British Council policy as found at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies/child-protection>
- vii. Information management: All data that the consultants gain access to in the course of their delivery of the assignment will be handled in line with British Council Information and Security policy as outlined at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies/child-protection>

3. Cross-cutting Issues

In the delivery of the assignment, the consultant will be required to ensure to be guided by British Council requirements as follows:

Diversity: All case studies and materials used for the programme will be in line with British Council equality and diversity approach as outlined at:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/how-we-work/equality-diversity-inclusion>

Child Protection: All case studies and materials used for the programme will be in line with British Council Child Protection policy as found at:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies/child-protection>

Information management: All data that the consultants gain access to in the course of their delivery of the assignment will be handled in line with British Council Information and Security policy as outlined at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies/child-protection>

Further requirements will be outlined in the contract to be signed

Terms of the Grant

- A grant agreement will be issued with detailed terms and conditions and will be signed with the administrative applicant.
- Project teams will be responsible for the marketing and communications of their project across the different countries of delivery.

- All project collateral must adhere to British Council's communication and branding requirements and should be visible across different social media channels to gain maximum visibility of the project (branding and social media guidelines will be provided). Collateral should be signed off by British Council marketing team.
- During delivery, the selected teams will be required to meet regularly with the British Council team to provide updates on the project and report against progress.
- Upon completion of the project, teams will be required submit financial and narrative reports using project report templates provided.

4. Selection Timeline

Date	Item
5th May 2025	Open call goes live on Good Grants
26th May 2025	Information session
27th June 2025	Deadline for submission of proposals
1st July -31st August 2025	Assessment Window
21 st July -25 th July	Final decision on selected festivals
28th July -8th August	Due Diligence of selected festivals
8 th August -15 th August	Contracting and vendor creation of successful grantees
September 2025	Announcements of Contract start date

5.

6. Cheers

Date	Item
25th Feb 2025	ToRS published – Microsoft Forms Open Call
4th April 2025	Deadline for submission of proposals
25th April	Final decision

30th April 2025	Contract concluded with winning supplier
1st May 2025	Contract start date

Budget

	Activity / Output	Approximate Cost £	Timeline	Comments
	Festival Connect Grants	100,000	Tranche 1 60% 70,000 by <i>End of August 2025</i> Tranche 2 30,000 by Dec 2025	Total Spend

Sourcing Options

Open Call

Our Festival Grant on submittable will offer funding across one funding round for festivals to deliver a single-artform, or multidisciplinary arts, programme of festival events or activities.