

Call for proposals



# culture of solidarity fund

Interregional edition

July -September 2021

*We invite you to apply for an interregional edition of the Culture of Solidarity Fund, set up by the European Cultural Foundation, and co-funded by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (German Federal Agency for Civic Education). This new call supports cultural collaboration initiatives between Eastern Germany and other European regions experiencing (post-pandemic) systemic transformations.*

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# Regional transformation & European Culture of Solidarity post-Coronavirus

The Coronavirus crisis has further accelerated transformative processes in Europe whose impacts often differ dramatically across regions. Where you live likely determines whether these social, economic, cultural, political, technological, and environmental transformations manifest as opportunities or challenges. The current crisis, moreover, has shown us just how fragile European solidarity really is. Now that the lockdowns are over, and restrictions are easing, how can Europeans heal the divides that the pandemic has both revealed and deepened?

Set up in response to the Coronavirus crisis, the *Culture of Solidarity Fund* supports innovative cultural projects that cross national borders, professional sectors and artistic disciplines and are eager to find collaborative solutions to systemic problems that limit the prospects of their communities thriving, in the wake of the pandemic.

This latest call focuses on communities in parts of Europe often at the peripheries of public interest that are contending with the Coronavirus crisis within a context of chronic economic decline brought on by deindustrialization, rural depopulation, and/or changing economic and political forces in recent decades. And while these regions are not alone in experiencing the increasingly harmful cascade of effects issuing from environmental degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss, they may believe they lack the necessary resources to mitigate them.

As a result, meaningful community structures and emotionally engaging places of collective identification have eroded in many of these regions, and with them, the sense of local pride and belonging. When the ties binding individuals to collective memories, values, customs, and beliefs are weakened, their undoing can alter the way people ordinarily socialize and communicate and fill them with misgivings, which is why social participation and community involvement need significant strengthening to counteract rising threats to hard-won social values and prevent Europe's democratic systems from being delegitimized. This is where cross-border alliances between local initiatives that work on an equal footing with people in their communities can play an important role.

While acknowledging its historically specific position, Eastern Germany is a prime example of a region that has proven its resilience, flexibility and capacity to innovate in the face of radically transformative challenges, accumulating a wealth of practical experience and skills that would benefit all Europeans at this critical moment, but in particular those regions similarly affected by systemic transformations. The Eastern German experience--its successes, failures, and challenges--could serve as their rallying point for culturally engaging with each other in a spirit of transnational solidarity and hands-on collaboration.

## What are we looking for?

This call is open to cultural organisations as well as organisations from other fields of work and public institutions that are based and/or active in Eastern Germany *or* in European regions similarly affected by deindustrialization, population decline, social dissolution, failing public infrastructure, and ecological crises.

It supports short- or longer-term *collaborative* actions that address, *through cultural work, one or more challenges* relating to socio-economic transformation and post-pandemic questions such as:

- » How will young generations and marginalised communities recoup lost opportunities?
- » How can citizens and communities in remote areas take advantage of accelerating digitalisation and labour market transformation?
- » How can rising social polarisation, political radicalism and populist movements be stemmed?
- » How can conventional media and digital platforms be engaged locally to better support communities?
- » Are cultural revitalisation strategies and creative industries suitable transformative resources in communities affected by deindustrialization?

- » How can sites of environmental destruction be turned into ecologically, culturally, and socially diverse landscapes that contribute to global climate justice while reinvigorating the quality of life of local populations?
- » How can local traditions be integrated into innovative architecture, design, spatial planning and climate research projects (e.g. in the context of the New European Bauhaus Initiative of the EU)?
- » What roles do questions of cultural mobility and the cultural transformation of space play in societies with ambitions to create more climate-neutral and biodiverse landscapes to live?

We are looking for project proposals in particular that:

- » act locally in one region but in close collaboration and **trans-national solidarity** with local initiatives in similarly challenged regions across Europe;
- » develop local **future-oriented cultural solutions** to shared systemic challenges;
- » align with **new interregional models of knowledge and practice exchange** that aspire to progressive socio-cultural changes in Europe.

## What do we offer?

Grants are available in two amounts subject to the number of partners:

- » €40.000 - two partners;
- » €60.000 - three partners or more.

The grant term will be up to 12 months, starting on 1 November 2021 and ending on 31 October 2022. Project activities funded through the grant may only take place within this timeframe.

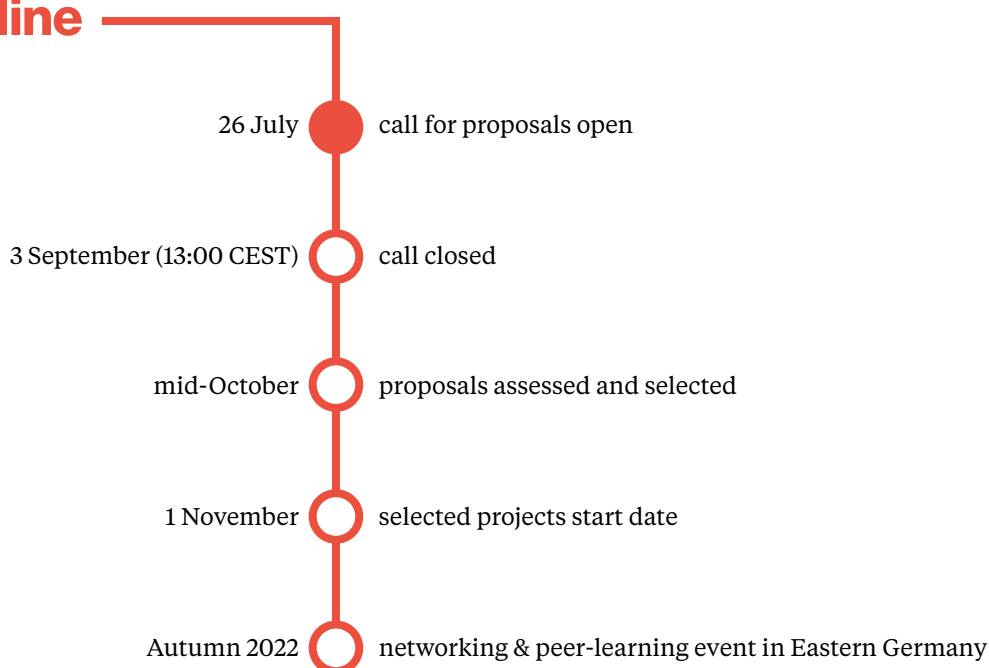
Although co-funding is not a prerequisite for funding, a balanced budget with diversified resources can significantly improve the feasibility of the project.

For details on the eligible costs and project timeline please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions available on the designated page of the call on our website

All selected projects and their partners will be invited to attend a networking and peer-to-peer learning gathering planned in Autumn 2022. This concluding group event will be hosted in one of the participating regions in Eastern Germany and will consolidate long-term knowledge exchange and cross-border learning effects after all supported projects have been completed.

**The submission deadline for the call is Friday, 3 September, 13.00 CEST.**

## Timeline



## Overall eligibility criteria

- » Project proposals must include a *minimum of two partners* (with the leading organisation submitting the application to ECF);
- » At least one partner must be based and active *in Eastern-Germany* and at least one partner must be based and active *outside of Germany*; project proposals that include three or more partners can also involve organisations from any other region of Germany outside Eastern Germany.
- » Non-German partners can be based anywhere in Europe (or its immediate neighbourhood), including all 47 Council of Europe member states and the EU Neighbourhood countries in North Africa; all proposals however have to address the overall focus of the call on transformational challenges in Eastern Germany and other European regions;
- » The call is open to any legal form of organisations that represent the civic, public or private sector and operate in the creative field or any other professional working areas and sectors of society, including education and academia, health and social care, environmental, human rights, social entrepreneurship, rural development, spatial planning, social entrepreneurship etc. However, *the lead applicant must be either a civic or public organisation.*
- » Applications must be submitted in English and must include a complete budget;
- » Applicants must be above 18 years old;
- » We do not accept proposals submitted by political parties. Our work is strictly non-partisan.

## Selection criteria & process

All incoming proposals will be assessed based on their

- » *relevance to the specific theme of this call and the overall focus of the Fund to strengthen a Culture of Solidarity in Europe;*
- » *originality and creativity of the proposal;*
- » *feasibility and practical implementation potential;*
- » *impact on the transformational challenge(s) addressed and communities involved;*
- » *quality and long-term potential of the cross-border collaboration initiated and learning and multiplication potential for other European regions;*
- » *embedded awareness on topics such as cultural diversity, equality, inclusion and media representation, environmental protection, climate justice and a sustainable way of working and travelling.*

**We welcome applicants from all backgrounds and walks of life with regards to their cultural and religious background and belief, age, race, colour, class, ability, sexual orientation or gender identity.**

Applications will be selected by a team of internal and external experts from a wide spread of geographic, cultural and professional backgrounds.

Due to the anticipated high volume of applications, we will complete the assessment procedure within 4 to 6 weeks from the submission deadline. It is also for this reason that decisions are final and that unfortunately, we cannot enter any correspondence regarding unsuccessful applications afterwards.

**To submit your application, please fill in the online form here:**

**[culturalfoundation.eu/initiatives/culture-of-solidarity-fund](http://culturalfoundation.eu/initiatives/culture-of-solidarity-fund)**

The application form must be completed online and cannot be saved during the inputting process. For this reason, we provide a WORD template with the main questions in the application form. We strongly recommend you to prepare your application in advance then cut and paste the content into the online form. Please make sure your budget is clear and realistic (fitting one of the grants' categories indicated) and refer to the provided template.

Good luck!

***Financial support to project proposals provided in the framework of this edition of the Culture of Solidarity Fund is subject to the provision of budgetary funds by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (German Federal Agency for Civic Education).***