

UK–IRL Culture Connects Grant 2026-27

Information Overview

*A British Council Ireland grant delivered in association with Arts Council
Ireland*

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1. Introduction

This toolkit provides applicants with supporting material to help with their UK-Ireland Culture Connects Grant application. It includes descriptions, tips, and guidance.

2. What is the UK-IRL Culture Connects Grant?

The **UK-Ireland Culture Connects Grant** is a British Council grant programme supporting artistic collaboration between the four nations of the UK and Ireland. It is developed and delivered in association with Arts Council Ireland. It aims to support emerging artists and art practitioners to collaborate with each other and develop work that would benefit from in-person collaboration. Applicants can be an arts practitioner in Ireland who wishes to work with one based in the UK nations or one practitioner in the UK who wishes to work with an arts collaborator in Ireland.¹

The focus of this fund is to strengthen and consolidate the initial stages of collaborations between art professionals.

This fund has been specifically designed to aid in-person creative development between two or more individuals who can demonstrate an idea or initiative that would substantially benefit from a period of time working together.

It is not output-oriented but is outcomes-oriented and has been designed to support the development of the applicant's practice in conjunction with an arts collaborator.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- The research and development of new creative ideas that might lead to collaborative work with another professional
- Working with a qualified mentor to deepen and challenge your artistic practice
- Exploring pathways of collaboration with an established creative producer
- Experimenting with new technologies or practices that are at the forefront of your artform
- Setting up new initiatives that might act as a pathway of exchange for artists and/or creative communities.

This grant is aimed at a bilateral partnership between one person based in, and resident in Ireland and collaborating with a person based in, and resident in one of the four nations of the UK. Only individuals whose place of residence is in Ireland or one of the four nations of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)² are eligible to apply.

¹ [Common Travel Area between Ireland and the UK](#)

² including the Common Travel Area as detailed here: [Common Travel Area between Ireland and the UK](#)

3. Grant amount available

Up to €3,000 per application. Smaller amounts are also eligible. An estimated budget is required. Further information is provided in point 8 of this document.

If personal access costs are required, please specify in the application form. Depending on the number of applications we receive we may need to determine a cap on additional personal access costs of €1,000 per application.

4a. Costs you can apply for:

- Your own time as an art practitioner for the duration of the proposal
- Fees to any individual or group collaborating with you on your proposal
- Travel costs
- Accommodation
- Hire of studios or facilities required for the delivery of your proposal
- Materials similarly associated costs. However, these are expected to be secondary to the aim of the Grant which is to collaborate and develop work that would benefit from in-person engagement
- Additional personal access costs for applicants or collaborators with disabilities

4b. Costs and activities that you cannot apply for:

You cannot apply for:

- The touring or dissemination of new and existing work in any type of settings including exhibitions, shows, publications, webinars, etc.
- Attendance at conferences
- The viewing of exhibitions or shows
- Participation to classes, workshops and other training activities
- Costs related to formal education at any level (including PhD programmes)
- Fees for higher education or study
- Activities undertaken for charity-fundraising purposes, for participation in a competition or for primarily profit-making purposes
- Significant costs related to the purchasing of equipment such as laptops, musical instruments, specialised software, etc.
- Activities taking place after 31st March 2027.

5. Timeline

- Applications open: 30 June 2026, 9am UK/IRL time.
- Informational sessions for applicants: Tuesday 7th July or Wednesday 8th 2026, 12 -1pm or 1-2pm UK/IRL time. Please note the online webinar which will be recorded and made available on the British Council Ireland website.
- Deadline: Friday 31 July 2026, 5pm (UK/Irish Standard Time).
- Notification: Successful applicants will be notified by close of business, close of business, Wednesday 30 September 2026.
- Grant agreement: Successful applicants will be required to sign and complete a Letter of Agreement which will be issued by the British Council and which will specify the grant details. An emailed **Letter of Offer (1)** will be issued to the Lead Applicant as indicated in the application form. With this Letter of Offer will be a **Letter of Agreement (2)** a **Bank Details Form (3)**. It is the Lead Applicant's responsibility to sign and return the **Letter of Agreement (2)** along with a fully completed **Bank Details Form (3)**. Accurate completion of the Bank Details Form along with a signed Letter of Agreement are required and funds will issue once successfully completed and returned. If forms are not successfully completed as required within 30 days of award, funds will not be processed.

6. Eligibility

- Applicants must be resident in one of the four nations of the UK or Ireland at the time of the application and for the proposed duration of the funded activities.
- Applicants resident in one of the four nations of the UK must include one partner resident in Ireland. Applicants resident in Ireland must include one partner resident in one of the four nations of the UK.
- Applicants requesting funding in excess of the maximum amount applicable will not be eligible. Only one application per collaboration can be submitted.
- Individuals only can apply and the applicant can only apply for themselves, not for their partner or on behalf of a collective.
- Individuals in full-time education are not eligible.
- People without a proved professional track-record are not eligible.
- Grant proposals must have a timeline ending no later than 31st March 2027.
- The collaboration can include face-to-face, or face to face and remote contact but cannot be remote contact only as the purpose of this award is to bring people together to collaborate in person.
- The maximum amount that can be applied for in any single application is up to €3,000 per application. Smaller amounts are also eligible.

- If personal access costs are required, please specify in the application form. Depending on the number of applications we receive we may need to determine a cap on additional personal access costs of €1,000 per application.
- Eligible art forms and proposed activities can include:
 - Architecture
 - Children and Young People’s Art
 - Dance
 - Film (artist-led only)
 - Literature
 - Music and Opera
 - Theatre
 - Circus, Street Performance and Spectacle
 - Participatory Arts
 - Traditional Arts
 - Visual Arts
 - Multidisciplinary

The key aspect of this bilateral **UK-Ireland Culture Connects Grant** is collaboration, where there are mutual exchange and value for all parties. This fund does not require a completed artistic output.

7. Key Themes and Terms

What can the Grant be used for?

The Grant should be used to support the process to develop new or existing ideas/projects that will result in collaborative activities including artistic and creative exchange of skills, knowledge and practice or the co-production *towards* new artistic and creative content.

While we accept applications covering all artforms and outcomes, applications from emerging artists and art practitioners will be prioritised. ‘Emerging’ refers to the period when the applicant is usually within eight years of the initial stages of their professional arts career and when they are in the process of acquiring public and critical recognition for their work, as well as consolidating a network of established collaborators.

A note on collaboration

Collaboration should be at the heart of every application. Before you apply, here’s a checklist of things you should consider:

- Have you developed your idea in collaboration and discussion with your partner(s)?
- Have you consulted your partner about the application?
- Have they read it through, and do they consent to everything proposed?

- How will you collaborate with your partner to administer the project?
- Who is writing the application?
- Who is going to be the Lead Applicant who is accountable for overall delivery and management of your Grant and who will report back to the British Council on your impact and progress if your partnership is successfully funded?
- How will you administer finances and budget tracking? Who is keeping receipts?
- How will you plan and deliver communications on your UK-IRL Culture Connects Grant?
- How will you administer monitoring and evaluation of your UK-IRL Culture Connects Grant?
- Is this the right stage to secure this Grant and would you benefit from a little more research and development so as to make the most value of your time and these funds?
- We require a letter from the collaborator which clearly confirms their willingness to collaborate, outlining the high-level details of the intended engagement and the artistic benefits that they will gain. This letter is to be uploaded to the Application form and should be signed with a wet ink signature and dated by the collaborator (max. 500 words).

8. Writing a Grant Budget

What is a budget?

For the scope of this Grant, a budget is the total estimated costs to complete your proposed activities.

Creating a well-researched budget will enable you to clearly anticipate the needs of your proposed activities and manage expectations of your partner with the time and resources you have available. It will also enable you to identify risks and prepare for changes as they arise. A strong budget will help you to:

- Communicate with your partner about when, and how much, money is needed.
- Predict and manage expenditure /cash flow; how much and when you are spending.
- Effectively manage future projects with a replicable template.

How to Create a Budget for a Grant?

We will ask you to provide a simple breakdown of expected costs (travel, accommodation, fees, other associated miscellaneous costs) and have suggested some headings in the Grant application form. Detailed budgets are not required.

We would like you to note any other funds that you will use in addition to this Grant including income and any in kind support.

Please make sure to include VAT and note all costs should be provided in €EURO values.

Income

Your proposal may also benefit from additional income such as funding from other sources or In-kind support. It is not necessary to have matching funds for this Grant or other income but if you do have this in place, these should also be reflected in your budget.

What is in-kind support?

In-kind means non-financial support provided to a project.

- It demonstrates the credibility and viability of a project, via the committed investment of existing partners and supporters
- In-kind support can be put into a separate column/row or in the notes section
- If there are multiple lines of in-kind support, it might be a good idea to total it at the end, so that your prospective funder understands your ask more clearly

What if I don't know my costs yet?

Sometimes, we don't know how much certain budget lines will cost when we write our budgets. It's still important that we estimate and anticipate these costs and ensure there is contingency planning in place for unforeseen expenses. If you don't know what your costs will be on writing your budget:

- You can always ask vendors for rates and ask experienced people around you
- Round out figures to the nearest 00s for budget lines where prices can fluctuate, for example air tickets for travel.
- Contingency can be one of the headings. Most projects keep around 5-10% of the total budget to cover any contingency costs. We would advise for this Grant that you have a limit of 10% for contingency.

Important things to note re Budget

You should ensure that your Grant budget directly addresses the costs associated with bilateral collaboration. Have you considered the following:

1. Translation costs – if you are working in different languages, have you factored in the cost to ensure that all participants can fully understand and engage with the work?
2. Flight / Travel / Visa costs – have you factored in the cost of artist/participant travel, and the possible impacts on costs to travel?
3. Bank transfer fees or Sterling Euro currency differences – you may need to transfer funds between partners and you may need to take account of the difference in currency. This can cost more than expected and so make sure to discuss this with your partner and check with your bank to include this in your budget.
4. The cost of safeguarding vulnerable participants, artists and audience members if you are working with people at risk or in contested spaces with limited freedom of expression.

Personal access costs

Have you factored access costs into your budget? Are you working with participants who might require support workers? If so, is this covered in the travel line of your budget? Will you require translators or materials that are translated into multiple languages or dialects? And will you need sign-language interpretation or captioning?

If personal access costs are required, please specify in the application form. Depending on the number of applications we receive we may need to determine a cap on additional personal access costs of €1,000 per application.

9. Working with People at Risk

Some individuals – particularly those with protected characteristics – can be placed at significant risk by engaging in certain activities in certain social and political contexts. If your project involves working with vulnerable artists, partners or other participants, you need to ensure that your application addresses your approach to ensuring they are safe, protected and supported throughout the process. You may need to plan and budget for a specialist to advise or support and this may influence how you plan to collaborate.

10. Assessment

The decision-making panel will consider a balanced portfolio of applicants, taking into consideration the representation of applicants across the full diversity of identities and communities characterising all partner countries as well a balance of artforms and geography.

Assessment Panel

The Assessment will comprise one representative of the British Council; one individual from Arts Council Ireland, and two independent advisors.

Assessment Process

All applications will go through a decision-making process as follows:

1. **Eligibility.** We check your application for eligibility. Ineligible applicants are notified by email.
2. **Assessment.** Every eligible application is assessed by the Culture Connects Assessment Panel on how well it meets the funding assessment criteria.
3. **Criteria.** All application decisions will be based on the criteria and weighting below.
4. **Decisions.** The Assessment Panel will make a recommendation and you will be informed of the decision by email.

- a. If you are not successful, you do not need to do anything further and you are entitled to apply again in the next available funding round, should one become available.
 - b. If you are successful, you will need to sign a Letter of Agreement with the British Council; and you will need to complete a form requesting your bank details and other particulars. You will need to return these forms completed with accuracy and with the details required, by the date and time specified in the initial offer email. Otherwise, your award will be forfeit.
5. **Feedback.** Unfortunately, it is not possible to receive feedback in this instance.

Assessment Eligibility

See Section 6 above.

Assessment Criteria

1. **Partnership Purpose** - The project benefits both UK and Ireland applicants with evidence of a strong partnership and is well articulated, clear on benefits to both individuals now and into the future.
2. **Artistic Quality** – The artistic aims of the partnership are clearly identified and articulated. The artistic framework is coherent with the track-record of all partners involved. The proposal demonstrates critical relevance and potential for future developments.
3. **Feasibility** – The proposal clearly demonstrates the capacity to deliver all planned activities in terms of: time frame; budget management; suitable resources, and the relevance of partners’ track record.

The British Council and Arts Council of Ireland are strongly values-led and have a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

All applicants should be familiar with these values.

[Our values | British Council](#)

[Equality, diversity and inclusion | British Council](#)

And

[About - The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon](#)

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon](#)

11. Submitting Your Application

Please submit your application using this link to the British Council [GoodGrants platform](#).

Should you have any queries, or require any clarification please complete this Microsoft Form with your query and we will revert as soon as we can, and within 7 working days: [UK-IRLCulture Connects Enquiry linked here.](#)

12. Some final tips

- Make sure you can clearly and succinctly describe what your project is. If someone asked you for a two-sentence description of your project, what would you say?
- Make sure that your project closely aligns with the assessment criteria.
- Collaboration is at the heart of the Grant. There should be equitable benefit for all the partners involved and the delivery of the project should be shared.
- Don't be vague and don't underestimate on your budget. There's no advantage in trying to shave off costs to bring your budget under a certain amount. Tell us what you think it will cost to deliver the best version of your project. The assessors will assess whether this seems like value for money, and a fair and equitable use of budget between the partners involved.
- Make sure the practicalities of bilateral collaborative working have been factored into your budget.
- Be wary of missing information. Make sure you double check your application is complete before you submit. Have you included your budget and the Letter of Intent? all your supporting documents? We can only assess what's there. Supporting documents requested are listed in the application form.
- If you're planning to work in sensitive socio-political contexts, and/or with participants at risk, can you demonstrate your project team has the expertise and experience to ensure the well-being and protection of everyone involved? And do you have allowance in your budget to ensure this happens?

We hope this information sheet has helped you. GOOD LUCK in preparing your application – we look forward to reading it!

For any enquiries, please contact us using the UK-IRL Culture Connects Enquiry form [here](#)