

NXT:now

**A new funding
programme for
collaborations
responding to the
challenges young
people in the UK and
Germany face today**

October 2026

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1. About the programme

NXT:now supports the development of **ambitious artistic projects and programmes that explore the challenges shaping the lives of young people (18-30) today.**

With this grant programme, the British Council would like to foster diverse artistic views on the cultures being shaped by and influencing this generation.

The programme invites project and programme proposals from organisations in the UK and Germany that together explore, reimagine or transform this generation's relationship with the **digital realm** or that respond to the impact that **local and global instabilities** have on young adults. The programme encourages projects that tap into the **creative and transformative power of youth culture**, including language, storytelling and aesthetics.

NXT:now asks how this generation can gain resilience by exploring new forms of creativity, community, agency and care in an increasingly digital and unstable world.

2. Programme context

This grant programme leads into the British Council's upcoming **UK-Germany Season of Arts and Culture**, planned for 2029.

The British Council's programme of International Seasons of Culture celebrates and deepens the UK's relationship with partner countries, enabling new international collaborations and providing a platform for UK culture. The UK-Germany Season will engage thematically with **how creativity and innovation amongst young people foster their resilience.**

The grants support the development of bilateral projects and programmes between April 2027 and March 2028. The implementation of projects and programmes should be planned for the first half of 2029 in Germany as part of the Season of Arts and Culture. There will be the opportunity to apply for further funding in 2028 for this.

3. Who can apply?

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be an organisation* registered in Germany or in the UK

- Work bilaterally on this project with a partner: German applicants with a UK partner and UK applicants with a German partner

The bilateral partner must also be an organisation registered in their country.

Eligibility:

- Each partner must be legally based in the country they are applying from at the time of application and throughout the project activity period.
- Applicants must ensure that they are appropriately registered, including for tax purposes where required, and compliant with all applicable local laws and regulations in the country where they are based and where funded activity is carried out.
- Partners must be separate legal entities.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have the appropriate legal, tax or registration status to receive and manage grant funding in the country where they are based or operating.
- Country-specific legal or tax requirements may apply.
- Where relevant, applicants may be asked to provide registration numbers, tax information, proof of legal status or equivalent documentation during due diligence and provisional award stage.
- The Lead Partner will be required to provide banking details during due diligence and contracting. Please note that the British Council cannot make payments to sanctioned individuals, organisations or financial institutions

This does not have to be the first time you work with this partner, but it can be.

We will only accept one application per partnership, and organisations can only be involved in one application. Multiple applications from an organisation will likely result in related submissions being made ineligible.

NXT:now is committed to promoting an equitable, diverse and inclusive network. The activity we support, and the workforce of arts and culture organisations we fund should reflect the diversity of the UK and Germany.

*By organisation we mean a group of people working towards a common goal with a governing document. A governing document is a legal agreement that explains what your organisation is set up to do, and how it will operate, and it should cover the type of activity being applied for.

All organisations must have a bank account in their name, with a minimum of two signatories (people allowed to sign cheques).

4. Who cannot apply?

We cannot accept applications from:

- Individual artists or practitioners
- Organisations based outside of Germany or the UK
- National or international networks or member organisations
- Universities or other educational establishments
- Organisations whose main function is grant-making

5. How much money is available?

We offer up to 12 grants between £15,000 and £20,000 in total per partnership, as well as [personal \(internal\) access costs](#) in addition to this. There is no requirement for match funding.

6. What can the funds be used for?

Applications can be for physical, digital or hybrid activity. The grants will fund the development of collaborations of a wide spectrum of artistic practices and cultural formats including (but not exclusively):

- Dance, music, film, theatre, performance, poetry and fashion
- Interactive or immersive experiences and narratives
- Spatial and sound experiences
- Site-specific and site-responsive work
- Multi-sensory, digital or hybrid environments
- Digital and analogue games or play-based work
- Exhibition and installation projects
- Inter-, multidisciplinary and cross-media projects

Grants can support activity happening for the first time (new projects) or activity that is a meaningful development of a previous project, e.g. its first international iteration.

7. What you cannot apply for

- Activity that is not arts-related
- Activity that is not focussed on responding to the challenges of the digital realm, or local or global instability facing young adults
- Activity that takes place or starts before April 2027, unless otherwise agreed
- Costs/activity that you already have covered by other funding
- General running costs and overheads that are paid for by other income, including your own funds
- Fundraising or profit-making activity
- Ongoing overheads related to equipment or buildings, such as insurance and maintenance costs
- Significant asset or investment purchases – see section 11 on p.9 for budget guidelines

We reserve the right to make a reduced offer where costs appear ineligible or unreasonable.

8. How and when to apply?

Fund opens:	8 October 2026
Application deadline:	10 January 2027
Decisions announced:	15 February 2027
Activity starts:	1 April 2027
Activity ends:	31 March 2028
Evaluation period:	until 31 May 2028

When the fund opens, a link to the NXT:now application portal will go live on our website: <https://www.britishcouncil.de/NXTnow-funding-programme>

You will be asked to complete a brief registration before being given access to the application form.

The first step will be a short quiz, to check that you are eligible to apply for this grant programme. Feel free to register and take the quiz to check you are eligible.

Applicants who require access provision to complete their application should contact the British Council Germany at arts@britishcouncil.de. Access provision requests should include appropriate details, such as the type of access provision requested, any estimated costs, a brief explanation of what the provision is needed for, and how it will support the applicant to complete the application. Applicants are encouraged to contact us as soon as possible and not to leave requests until close to the application deadline. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and we aim to respond within 3 to 4 working days on average.

There will be two (identical) information sessions about the grant programme to have your questions answered by the British Council Germany team. Sign up via the links below.

Online information sessions

[2 November 2026, 16:00 CET](#)

[30 November 2026, 16:00 CET](#)

9. How will applications be assessed?

First, the application will be checked for eligibility. Please make sure the activity and partners are eligible for this fund – see sections 3 and 4 (who can/cannot apply) and sections 6 and 7 (what funds can/cannot be used for).

Once eligibility has been checked, the application will be assessed by an international jury panel comprised of young cultural leaders and art experts nominated by the British Council.

The jury will assess the application according to the following four criteria:

The organisations

- Track record of both partners in innovative and/or impactful creative work
- Quality of the artistic work produced by both partners
- Rationale for the partnership for this activity

Programme approach

- Clarity of activity aims
- Extent to which the activity addresses challenges shaping and/or impacting the lives of young adults
- Ambition and potential for new approaches
- Potential to reach new audiences

Potential benefits/impact

- Impact on both organisations/artists taking part
- Impact on potential future audiences

Management of activity, including timeline and budget

- Appropriateness of funding request, fees and activity costs
- Quality of planning, including timeline, task and budget management
- Clarity of evaluation approach e.g. methods to monitor, capture and share learning outcomes
- Feasibility of the project's implementation in the first half of 2029.

Desirables

In making the decisions for the final grants, panellists will also consider:

- Projects that have the ambition to develop a longer life-span
- Projects that reach and/or connect public audiences in both Germany and the UK

- Geographic diversity: we aim to fund projects across German states and the four UK nations
- Cultural diversity: giving voice to or engaging marginalised or underprivileged groups (across race, gender, sexuality, abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, religion and other protected characteristics)
- Engaging young people (18-30) in the decision-making/creative process
- Featuring local perspectives and place-based narratives driven by younger people

Due to the limited capacity of our jury, we are unable to offer tailored feedback on unsuccessful applications to this programme.

10. Completing the application form

A summary of the questions you will be asked to complete in the online application form are available to download on the British Council Germany website. Please use these questions as an initial guide, application form questions are subject to minor changes up until the fund opening date. You will also be requested to fill in a [Partnership Letter of Intent](#) to show your commitment to working with your chosen partner organisation.

11. Budget guidelines and access costs

We will ask you to produce your budget in a separate Excel spreadsheet (template below) listing the spending for your activity. This should be a complete breakdown of activity income (where applicable) and expenditure for the German and UK partner on the project. As a guideline, you should include the following categories, plus any others as necessary:

- Salaries or fees* for artists or creatives involved
- Other artistic or creative costs e.g. research, digital capture
- Hires or purchases* e.g. venue, materials or equipment
- Marketing and developing audiences
- Access costs* e.g. personal and/or activity related
- Travel* and accommodation
- Overheads* e.g. insurance, travel documentation etc.

We will ask you to use separate tabs within the spreadsheet to present the budgets of the German and UK partners separately in £ or € as appropriate. Please use the [budget template here](#).

***Salaries or fees**

Your budget should include fees for artists and professionals involved in the activity. We are committed to fair pay for those who work in creativity and culture and we expect you to ensure that rates of pay for artists and professionals involved in your activity (including you) are in line with, or better than relevant industry standards. You should also take into account experience and skills, the type of work and the length of the activity.

***Hires or purchases**

If you need to purchase any materials or equipment (assets) you should include these costs in the budget and tell us about them in the description field. Buying assets is not the main purpose of the programme, but we understand that you may need to make some purchases to be able to carry out the activity.

As part of our eligibility checks we will decide if any proposed asset purchases are appropriate. For German organisations investment/asset purchases should not exceed 800 Euro (net).

***Access costs**

Access costs are non-artistic costs aimed at removing barriers to participation for yourself, someone you are working with or employing, or for participants or audiences engaging with your activity.

There are two categories of access costs:

Personal access costs (internal):

If you, as the organisation lead, or any of the core team of people you are delivering the activity with are Deaf, disabled, neurodivergent or have a long-term health condition, there may be extra costs relating to your or their access needs to help deliver grant activity.

Some examples are:

- A sign language interpreter
- Specialist equipment or software
- Additional travel costs
- A Personal Assistant for a disabled person

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and you should tell us what you require in order to deliver the activity. Personal Access Costs are treated separately to your main activity budget. These costs can be in excess of your total funding request and may take your budget above the funding limit.

Where personal access costs are requested, we will ask you to provide further detail in the application form, including a breakdown of the costs involved and what they will be used for.

Activity access costs:

All other access costs relating to your activity should be included within your main budget. This can include the costs for making your activity accessible to public audiences, participants and artists e.g. interpreters for an event, and costs related to childcare and other caring responsibilities where you are unlikely to be able to undertake the planned activities without this support.

***Travel**

Where possible please consider sustainable travel: mobility that takes advantage of low or zero-emission, energy-efficient modes of transport e.g., trains or buses, including hybrid and electric vehicles (EV). Travel costs for German applicants may be calculated taking into account the regulations in Federal law of travel costs 'Bundesreisekostengesetz'.

***Overheads**

UK partners can apply for overhead costs that are directly related to the activity you are asking us to support - for example, payments to staff, phone bills, postage, and travel insurance. You can apply for a contribution to your ongoing overheads if these are not already covered by other funding. You may also include a reasonable contingency within your budget for unforeseen costs.

We understand that changes may need to be made to your activity budgets during the delivery period, however any significant changes will need to be agreed with the UK or German funding lead.

12. Notification of successful applicants

Successful applicants will be informed by 15 February 2027, from which point, grants and payment schedules will be agreed before the activity commences.

Successful grantees – the partner applying for the funding – will be awarded the full amount of the grant before programme activity starts.

As part of the funding agreement, we will ask successful grantees to share learning: insights and practice-based discoveries with the network and more publicly through contributions to our programme communications and other materials. We will also ask grantees to contribute towards evaluative work during and after the end date of the funded activity.

13. Any questions?

As we are a very small team, please make sure you have read the guidance in full before reaching out to us. If your question remains unanswered, please contact:

Lucinda Curzon and Zoe Gläser

Project Coordination

British Council Germany

arts@britishcouncil.de

You can write to us in German or English, whatever suits you better. We will try to answer requests within 3-4 working days in your preferred language.