

Connections Through Culture

Application toolkit

Application toolkit

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1: Introduction

This toolkit has been designed to provide applicants to our UK-East Asia Connections Through Culture (CTC) Grant Programme 2023, with additional material to support their applications. It includes some useful descriptions of terms and some handy hints and tips!

2: What is CTC?

Connections Through Culture (CTC) is a grant scheme by the British Council to support artistic collaboration and exchange between creative professionals and arts organisations in East Asia and all four nations of the UK.

It aims to support new connections, exchanges, and collaborations between the UK and East Asia that build long-term relationships among artists, creative practitioners, and art and cultural organisations, hubs, networks, and collectives through collaborative digital, face to face, and/or hybrid artistic projects.

We are delighted to announce that the CTC 2023 grant applications are open from 11 September to 23 October 2023, and we look forward to receiving your proposals. The eligible countries in East Asia for this round are **Australia, the mainland of China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, and Thailand.**

	East Asia Partner Country	Grant Value
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UK-East Asia Connections Through Culture Grant Programme 2023	Australia, Japan, New Zealand	Up to GBP 5,000
	The mainland of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand	Up to GBP 10,000

Timeline

- Open Call launched: 11 September 2023
- Information sessions: 18-22 September 2023
- Open Call closed: 23 October 2023
- Successful projects notified: 23 November 2023
- Grant agreement signed: 29 December 2023

3: Eligibility

Before making your application, please ensure you have read the full list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and your application meets the following conditions:

- Each application must comprise of at least one (1) UK partner and one (1) East Asia partner from countries listed above
 - * Thailand: Due to our office's foundation status in Thailand, grants can only be processed through the Thai partner (Lead Applicant or Counterpart Applicant) of the CTC UK-Thailand grants.
- The size of grant requested is within the thresholds of funding as in the table above
- Project proposal should have a timeline ending no later than **31 October 2024**
- Organisation applicants should be registered in the UK or in any of the listed East Asia countries (**Australia, the mainland of China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, and Thailand**)
- Individual applicants should be East Asian nationals living inside any of the listed East Asia countries (**Australia, the mainland of China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, and Thailand**) or UK individuals based/living inside of the United Kingdom unless temporarily living but retaining a home address in the United Kingdom and defined by His Majesty's Revenue & Customs as 'resident the in the UK' for tax – see [here](#)
- Funding bodies are not eligible
- Proposed projects must be projects for the arts, cultural or creative sector(s) within any of the following art forms:
 - Film
 - Creative technology (incl games, immersive, mixed, augmented and virtual reality)
 - Literature
 - Visual Arts
 - Theatre and dance (including circus)
 - Architecture, design & fashion (including craft)
 - Music

We also welcome proposals for:

- Cross-art form projects
- Projects with themes relevant to the creative economy
- Cross-disciplinary art projects (e.g., art + science, art + technology)
- The scope of a project might be simply to collaborate on a piece of art, a film, piece of writing or music, or could include any of the following:
 - Residencies

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- Exhibitions, festivals, showcases, workshops, performances, screening programmes
 - Projects which focus on or include digital innovation (such as projects which combine art with technology in a new or different way)
 - Conferences, panels and talks
 - Creative use of archives
 - Research and development of future project ideas

Although this is not a programme focusing on professional development, the outcome doesn't strictly need to be a completed artistic outcome. The development of skills can be part of a project with the primary outcomes supporting creative and artistic work. The delivery of projects can be digital, face-to-face, or a hybrid blend of both.

4: Key Themes and Terms

What can the grant be used for?

The grant should be used to support the process to develop new projects with artistic expression or creativity at the core and that will result in collaborative activities including artistic and creative exchange of either skills, knowledge and practice or the co-production towards new artistic and creative content. Various approaches can be employed such as art residencies, exhibitions, performances and showcases, publications, webinars, and conferences, among others.

While all proposals meeting the above eligibility criteria will be considered, we encourage proposals responding to the following priority themes for this year:

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Climate Change

A note on collaboration

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

- Have you developed your project idea in collaboration and discussion with your partner(s)?
- Have you consulted your partner(s) about the application? Have they read it through, and do they consent to everything proposed?
- How will you collaborate with your partners 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 project and report back to the British Council on your impact and progress if you're successfully funded?
- How will you administer finances and budget tracking?

It's also important to acknowledge there are cultural differences that can affect how collaboration works. Have you discussed the following with your partner(s):

- Differing professional cultures and their impact on time-management, administration and communication. We all have different preferred approaches to communication. Discussing this together can really help build a strong and effective collaboration!
- Differing approaches to administration
- Is there anything that can be put in place to support with any language barriers, such as translation?
- Are there any access needs which could support how you work together?
- What are your preferred modes of communication – emails, calls? It's important to be clear about this to manage expectations and work harmoniously together! If you foresee problems with communicating digitally due to poor wifi connections, have you factored the cost of wifi boosters into your budget, for example?

- National and/or religious holidays that may impact scheduling and delivery
- How will you approach making decisions together?

When working in collaboration to deliver a project, as well as building lasting relationships, there are some key points and principles to remember.

KEY TERMS:

- **RESPECT** - approach each other as equals from the beginning of the working relationship. Seek active input to frame activity planning. Work together and support each other to overcome challenges and celebrate successes
- **TRUST** - take time to build purposeful, lasting relationships
- **INTEGRATED** - create integrated programming opportunities and ensure the work serves the communities connected to each partner
- **INVEST** - allocate adequate resources to build and sustain successful partnership working
- **INNOVATION** - demonstrate new forms of content, new methods of delivery, new design processes, or new approaches to your audience. Work in a new country or with a new partner

5: Writing a project budget

What is a project budget?

A project budget is the total projected costs needed to complete a project. It is not a static document and might change as your project progresses. That said, a project budget helps you keep on track and be realistic with your project scale and spending.

Why do you need a project budget?

Creating a well-researched project budget for your CTC project will enable you to clearly anticipate the needs of your proposed project and manage expectations of what is achievable 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 project budget will help you to:

- Communicate with stakeholders about when, and how much, money is needed
- Control and limit project costs
- Measure performance and unforeseen changes
- Predict and manage expenditure /cash flow; how much and when you are spending
- Generate value for money statements. Comparing your spending with your project impact will help you communicate the effectiveness of your work
- Effectively manage future projects with a replicable template

How to Create a Budget for a Project?

The first step is mapping out the headings shown in the table below. You may want to use Excel for your budget as its formulas and other features which can be helpful. Here are some examples of heading types you might consider when creating your project budget:

Heading types	Description
Serial Number	A Serial Number helps provide numerical reference to each cost heading

Particulars	Describes the cost in a few words; often we group costs that are related, for example: Venue for Venue for workshop can cover all costs associated with the space
Units	How many units are required? This is paired with Unit Type and Unit Cost
Unit Type	Here we categorise the units by definition (e.g. person, day, hours, pieces, grams) anything to specify the unit of measurement being used. At times, some costs are difficult to detail in units in such cases we use “lump-sum” as a unit type and use 1 unit lump-sum, which communicates a pre-determined amount that is not dependent on the unit
Unit Cost	The cost of individual units, which can then be multiplied by the number of units required to create a total cost for this budget line
Total Cost	This is the final column where we multiple the number in the Units column with the Unit Cost column to generate a total cost
Notes	You can always add a notes column to further describe the cost if necessary

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. This is particularly important for international projects where global-socio-economic changes, and natural disasters, can have a big impact on budgets.

If you don't know what your costs will be on writing your budget:

- Use historical/market data 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 international travel
- Contingency can be one of the headings. Most projects keep around 5-10% of the total budget to cover any contingency costs. CTC has a limit of 10% for contingency

Please note that allocations for staffing posts to deliver the project should be included as a separate line.

What are some common cost headings in an arts project budget?

To help you plan your budget, below are some common cost headings that you will want to consider together with advice for international projects.

<u>Heading</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Unit Type</u>
Venue	Space for conducting activities	Days, hours, month etc.
Training costs	For example, the cost of training existing or project staff in safeguarding if the project is working with participants at risk	Hourly rate for professional training
Materials	Newly produced materials e.g. magazine or information brochures – usually involves a design and printing fee.	Cost per page/unit for printing Cost per hour / day for designer Cost per unit of material

	This could also refer to art materials to be used within the project e.g. paint	
Professional fees	Fees for contracted artists, facilitators, designers, specialists etc., relating to the project	Usually day rate or lumpsum
Management/ Coordination	Cost of managing / coordinating project (e.g. new staff positions to deliver the project or additional hours for existing staff to deliver the project)	Usually a percentage of the budget. Could be existing staff or project-based hires
Accommodation	Hotel room	Cost per night (check any additional taxes) - often an estimate
Travel & transportation	Train / rail / fuel for participants, or shipping costs for materials/items	Either Per Diem cost, or total cost per trip per person – often an estimate
Visibility Material	Production of public facing assets for project promotion	Includes many different types of cost so this is usually a lumpsum
Social Media Promotion	Cost of promoting work or project on social platforms	Usually a lumpsum
Subsistence / per diems	Daily allowance for food and drink when travelling to a different country	Cost per person per day (usually 2-3 meals a day)
Photography/videography	Costs for filming or recording the activity	Usually a day rate for a videographer/photographer/editor
Translation and access	Translator or sign-language	Cost per day for translators or sign-language providers
Bank charges	Bank charges for making international transfers to pay artists or partners	Usually a single fee per transaction, and variable on banking provider and location
Access Costs	For example, costs relating to making the project accessible to d/Deaf, hard of hearing, or blind audiences (e.g., relevant sign language interpreters), or costs associated with making venues more accessible, or providing transport for disabled participants/partners. It may also be costs for a support worker to support a partner or participant who requires this	Can be a day rate for sign-language interpreters or an accessibility expert. Or it could be costs associated with material items/alterations to make a venue more accessible for your project or ensuring transport which is suitable for disabled participants
Evaluation	Cost for evaluating the impact and success of your project	Usually a day rate for an external evaluation consultant
Wellbeing support	Where projects address more challenging subjects you may want to	Usually day rate or lumpsum

	include costs for a specialist to support the team or participants	
Contingency	A sum of money to cover unexpected costs associated with the effective delivery of the project	CTC has a limit of 10% contingency

Income

Your project may also benefit from additional income such as funding from other sources, ticket sales or In-kind support. This 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
- Co-production is different than in-kind support but equally important to reflect in your budget.
- You might be working with multiple funders. It is a good idea to mention the contributions of each funder in your budget
- A budget table can easily be adapted with more columns e.g., 'Source of Funds'

How do I manage and update my budget during the project?

- Update costs as they are spent
- Record actuals in a new column to see if your planning has been effective, this also helps track any variance
- Develop an expenditure plan by combining your activities timeline with your budget

Special Considerations for a CTC Budget

International collaboration

- Ensure you are paying artists fairly and equally across all the countries involved. It may be that the average pay for an artist working on a project is lower in some countries, but it is important to ensure any artists working on your project are paid equally, wherever they are based in the world
- Think about per diems if your project includes travel to different countries. If you're asking artists/participants to travel abroad, have you ensured that their per diems are enough to ensure that they can participate according to the cost of living in each country they are asked to travel to? Discuss with your partners regarding what is reasonable in the contexts in which you are working
- Your budget needs to reflect how the project funding will be split, managed and spent across the organisations involved in the project in an equitable way

For a CTC project, you should ensure that your project budget directly addresses the costs associated with international collaboration. Have you considered the following:

1. Translation costs – if you are working across nations with different languages, have you factored in the cost to ensure that all participants and audiences 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?

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3. International Bank transfer fees – you may need to transfer funds between partners. 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. International transfers can also take longer than expected to factor this into your timeline
 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

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?

Accessibility in venues

We also acknowledge that sometimes accessibility is more difficult to measure and attain. You can share details of this from your country context(s) within your application/budget if you feel it is relevant to your proposed project.

Be sure to include any costs relating to access in your budget, and research them thoroughly.

International travel risk factors

- Do you have contingency plans in place if, for example, there is a natural disaster or political situation that prevents or delays travel?
- Visa applications – have you considered the time management cost for visa applications, and a contingency plan should any visa applications be denied? This could impact your project and your timeline so it is good to factor this in at the start

What is a contingency budget and what should it cover?

A contingency budget is a percentage of your overall budget. We suggest up to 10% for CTC projects, which exists as a safety-net to cover unforeseen project costs. Particularly when you are working internationally, you should ensure that a contingency budget could consider the following unforeseen and additional costs associated with:

- protecting artists and/or participants at risk
- visa application costs
- natural disaster or conflict
- changes in country inflation
- rising travel/shipping costs
- unexpected exchange rate fluctuations

Discuss the above together as partners as it's important your budget is rigorously planned so that you can cover all your projected costs with the amount you are requesting and any additional income you have secured.

6: Working with people at risk and/or in sensitive socio-political contexts

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, audience members 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 deliver the project.

If you are planning to work in particularly sensitive socio-political contexts, or with artists who have protected characteristics – for example, members of marginalised communities – can you demonstrate that your project team has the expertise and experience to ensure the well-being and protection of everyone involved? If not, have you considered or factored in expert support, advice or guidance, which is included in your budget? Have you considered how you will approach sensitive subjects within different cultural and country contexts? For example, if your project deals with a subject or area which is sensitive within your country, or your partner countries, what steps might you take to ensure the safety of your partners, participants and audiences? It is important that your budget, project plan and risk management include provisions for supporting participants' well-being and safety.

Please note that the British Council will run a workshop in early 2024 to support successfully funded projects on this subject.

7: Assessment

All applications will be evaluated by the British Council based on the following criteria and weighting:

Quality - The project proposal is of a high artistic/creative quality, is innovative in its approach and shows consideration how the project might continue after this year of delivery.	25%
Partnerships - The project proposal is mutually and equally benefitting both UK and East Asia applicants.	25%
Management - The project proposal is well planned and resourced and demonstrates equitable use of the budget between the UK and East Asia applicants.	25%
Theme and Relevance - The project proposal addresses equality, diversity, inclusion, or environmental sustainability.	25%
	Total 100%

Assessment criteria 1 | Quality - 25%

Assessors will be looking at the project proposal and if it is of a high artistic/creative quality and if it is experimental and or innovative in its approach. Is the project outline and what the project aims to achieve clear, and who is the intended audience?

The assessors will look for:

- Evidence of **artistic quality and benefit to individual artists/ creatives**
- **Clear project outline** and evidence of **developed discussions between partners**
- If relevant, evidence of how project will incorporate **innovation***
- Evidence of who the **intended audiences are**
- Evidence of **how the project might continue after this year of delivery**

*Please note, **by innovation** we mean that the project demonstrates new forms of content, new methods of delivery, new design processes, or that the project approaches audiences in a new way or working in a new country with a new partner.

Assessment criteria 2 | Partnership - 25%

Assessors will want to see how you will work together as partners.

Assessors will look for evidence of:

- How the partners will work together in a way which factors in equality within the partnerships
- The mutual and equal benefit to both UK and international applicants and that it demonstrates shared use of the budget between the UK and international partners
- An equitable approach to collaborative working, e.g. how the partners will work together, what each will contribute and benefit from their relationship, that consideration has been made on international working, such as culture, time zones, different environments. How do the partners know each other? How will they support each other, how will the budget be split between partners? What each partner will bring to the project, and how will this benefit all partners and how the collaboration might continue beyond this project

Assessment criteria 3 | Management - 25%

Assessors will want to see the following explanations about your project proposal.

- How it has been planned and resourced and that it has considered reasonable risks and mitigations
- How your project will bring a positive contribution to the countries you are working in

Assessors will look for evidence of:

- A realistic of project plan – in terms of timescale and budget – and evidence of the partner's ability to deliver, based on their track record
- consideration of risks and solid plans on how partners will reduce risks – including those related to the countries they are working in – and plans for marketing and promotion of the project
- Projects demonstrate that they are making a positive contribution to the cultural development of the international partner's country / territory which could support social and economic development to the country involved, such as skill sharing with audiences or partners; capacity building; promotion of international profile; providing platforms to underrepresented groups or artists or practices

Assessment criteria 4 | Theme and Relevance - 25%

Project proposal meeting eligibility criteria will all be considered while our priority themes for this year are:

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Climate Change

At the British Council, we work towards mainstreaming our Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles ([Equality, diversity and inclusion | British Council](#)) and practices across all our work and are committed to reducing our environmental footprint. This includes how we engage with stakeholders, participants and partners. We will be assessing how projects address and consider Diversity, Inclusion and Environmental sustainability within their projects.

Assessors will want to see:

- Evidence of diversity and inclusion in project team and/or project delivery and/or in subject and/or in targeted audiences*
- Consideration around access for disabled partners, participants and/or audiences, as required
- Consideration around how the project will be delivered with inclusion in mind, such as transport, venues**, online access, or sign-language interpreters and within marketing materials as required
- How you are considering environmental sustainability within your project

Assessors will also check that the proposal budget includes, where needed, costs for access and any additional support for working with different groups or, specialists where needed.

Assessors will also consider whether there is evidence of:

- recognition of potential risks in relation to diversity and inclusion
- planning around environmental sustainability within delivery of the project. How will the project reduce potential environmental carbon footprint in delivery

** This could be how the project might increase the reach to include under-represented artists and/or creatives, organisations, communities, networks, or delivering work for under-represented audiences. It might be how the project creates platforms for women, disabled groups, marginalised communities in delivery and/or for audiences. We understand that diversity and inclusion will be different in different country contexts. You can include a short description in your application of what diversity and/or inclusion means in the context of your project and the countries you are working with.*

*** We acknowledge that it is not always possible to have provision of accessible venues, but you can describe what access means in your country context, and what a good standard of access might mean in your country.*

8: Some previous CTC projects examples

- [UK-Malaysia projects 2022](#)
- [UK-Indonesian projects 2022](#)
- [UK-China projects 2022](#)

9: Submitting your application on Submittable

[Application to UK-East Asia Connections Through Culture Grant Programme 2023](#)

10: Access support for writing your application

If you identify as disabled, you are welcome to contact us at CTC@britishcouncil.org for possible support we may offer to assist with making your application.

Please note that applications will not be assessed on the quality of written English.

11: Some Final Key Tips for your Application

Here are some tips for your application.

- 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 CTC assessment criteria**
- **Collaboration** is at the heart of the CTC programme. 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 international collaborative working have been factored** into your budget

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- **Pay your artists properly!** Make sure artists are paid equitably and fairly, in line with other roles in the project, and that artists are paid equally across all the countries represented in your application
 - Be wary of **missing information**. Make sure you double check your application is complete before you submit. Have you included your budget and all your supporting documents? We can only assess what's there. Supporting documents requested are listed in the application form, ie
 - Agreement Letter(s) from Partner(s) ([Please download the template and complete](#))
 - CV of Project Leader
 - Project Budget ([Please download the template and complete](#))
 - 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?
 - Successful CTC projects match ambitious artistic creative and collaborative goals with **well researched audience numbers and robust legacy plans**.

We hope this toolkit has helped you. GOOD LUCK in preparing your application – we look forward to reading it! You can see a copy of the [PDF application form](#) for easy reference. However, please complete [your application on Submittable here](#)