Open Call for Cultural and Artistic Projects

"Skopje European Capital of Culture 2028"

Call for Submission of Proposals

for Cultural and Artistic Projects

Disclaimer

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European Capital of Culture and Skopje 2028

The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) is a European Union initiative established in 1983 by Melina Mercouri to celebrate Europe's cultural diversity and shared heritage. By designating a host city, the program promotes culture as a catalyst for European cooperation, sustainable development, and social cohesion. ECoC cities benefit from local, national and some EU funding, generating long-term social and economic impact when culture is embedded in strategic urban development.

In 2023 Skopje was awarded this prestigious title by the EU. The ECoC title has reinforced Skopje´s vision of culture as a driving force for urban transformation and long-term planning. It demonstrates how arts and culture can unite communities, overcome divisions, and inspire other European cities and citizens as well as seeking inspiration from Europe and beyond. Central to the Skopje 2028 vision is the motto, **"Culture over division",** reflecting Skopje's soft power and civic character.

A city's identity, like that of a nation, is rooted in its culture—the foundation of its educational, cultural, and economic institutions. Skopje embodies this through its historic heritage, cultural and educational institutions, artistic and sporting venues, and vibrant public spaces, all shaped by an active, multiethnic civil society. Through Skopje 2028, we aim to promote broader European understanding of culture as a unifying and transformative force.

We have always been a place of ambition, creativity, and exchange—an energetic hub of culture, trade, and innovation. The more open and inviting we are, the more cosmopolitan and modern we become. With strong international connections, our city can continue to spark and strengthen cultural relations across Europe and beyond.

We have chosen this direction with confidence, **to make Skopje a successful European Capital of Culture in 2028.**

1. Introduction & Purpose of the Call

The Skopje 2028 ECoC title was awarded to the City of Skopje by the European Union in 2023. The implementation is led by an independent Body under the City of Skopje. The Skopje 2028 invites artists, cultural organizations, civil society, creative industries, educational institutions, informal collectives and European partners to submit project proposals for the official Skopje 2028 Cultural and Artistic Program.

This Open Call is designed to:

- Strengthen European cooperation, mobility, and co-creation,
- Support citizen-centered, participatory cultural practices,

- Promote radical creativity and innovation,
- Address shared European topics and social challenges,
- Contribute to the long-term cultural transformation of Skopje.

Skopje 2028 is rooted in the motto **Culture Over Division**, a commitment to cultural solidarity, civic imagination, democratic engagement, ecological responsibility, and European values.

This call merges the structural requirements of the City's Public Call with the conceptual program framework of Skopje 2028, producing a unified, harmonized ECoC.

2. Conditions for proposals

The conditions for implementation also encompass a high level of inclusive creativity and innovation, inspired by tradition, everyday life, and the streets of Skopje, and by forms of expression passed down through generations. These impulses are reinterpreted through a European Capital of Culture framework that highlights and celebrates Europe's cultural diversity, situating local narratives within a broader European cultural context.

Art is presented as a call for unity, inclusiveness, and the celebration of shared cultural richness that stimulates imagination and exchange. Creation unfolds across the city and its ten municipalities, in open and accessible spaces, reaching every corner of Skopje. The cultural heritage specificities of the city are brought to the fore, reimagined and innovated through co-creation with cultural and artistic partners from across Europe. This is expressed through art, music, ecology, and cultural practices, and articulated through galleries presenting local and international work, as well as through folklore, festivals, and events that capture the essence of European diversity and originality.

Where relevant to the overall concept of the Skopje 2028 program, existing festivals and events are rethought and renewed in line with the program's themes, enabling continuity while fostering innovation. The aim is to create moments in which every citizen can feel the pulse of their existence, their joy, and their sense of fulfilment.

The project Skopje European Capital of Culture 2028 therefore, is much more than a local ambition; it is a call to action across the entire European cultural landscape. Through this public call, the project seeks to demonstrate the capacity of art and culture to act as unifying forces, overcoming divisions and strengthening mutual understanding. It reflects the core values of Europe and affirms a shared commitment to diversity, cooperation, and cultural dialogue.

This document contains specifications and additional information describing the application call. The conditions for the realization also include high and universal creativity, innovation, inspired by tradition, life, the streets of Skopje, a display passed down through many generations, an idea that pulsates in the European spirit. Art is a cry for unity, a call for inclusiveness and a celebration of the enrichment of common culture, imagination, attraction that attracts. Creation that is told throughout the city, down the TEN municipalities in Skopje, in the open, down every corner of the city, a display that creates art, music, ecology, a display told through galleries that show local and global art, folklore, festivals of all kinds, that capture the essence of diversity and unusualness. Creating a moment in which every citizen will feel the pulse of their existence, their joy and satisfaction. The project "Skopje European Capital of Culture 2028" is not only a local goal; it is a call for action across the entire European landscape. Through this public call, we hope to illuminate the enormous potential of art and culture as unifying forces, overcoming divisions. It is an undertaking that coincides with the very essence of Europe, proof of the values we hold dear.

Secured budget: 300,000 EUR (three hundred thousand euros)
Document Identification no. 08-856/1

3. What amounts will be granted?
This call for proposals has a total budget of €300,000 (three hundred thousand euros).

The City of Skopje and the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, has secured financial resources for the implementation of the Skopje 2028 project and for the launch of a call for proposals for the Skopje 2028 cultural and artistic program. Part of these funds will be allocated to cover obligations arising from contracts concluded for the implementation of the project program for the period 2026–2029.

4. Approach

The City of Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia, hereby invites eligible and qualified applicants to submit proposals for the five thematic strands: Art4Hope, Togetherness, rECOvering, CreARTing, and Heritage. These strands form a planned program comprising a wide range of creative events and activities. The projects selected through this call will be fully integrated into the program structure during the preparatory phase, covering the period from 2026 to 2029, covering:

1. **Art for Hope – Art4Hope:**
   Overcoming feelings of apathy and hopelessness represents a significant obstacle in individual and collective progress, which requires us to make

maximum efforts to fight. In this framework, the main accent is the unification of the artists and creators of Skopje, together with the wider community, for the common nurturing of hope and the conviction of the potential for the transformation of Skopje into a better living environment. In Skopje, the longing for "positive narratives" has a huge meaning - a real demonstration of what it means to win for the majority. Hope is imperative, especially in order to stop the increased emigration of our young population.

We call on artists and creators to boldly enter the unexplored sphere of creative expression, without fear of failure, and to accept a multitude of interdisciplinary approaches, while at the same time introducing new places for cultural events. This approach is characterized by the essence of art, creativity and innovation, nurturing a culture of resilience and rejuvenation.

Our motto resonates: "It is not hope that prompts action - action prompts hope." The "Skopje European Capital of Culture 2028" project embodies a project that directly encourages action and injects the renewed vitality that the city seeks through collective achievements.

2. Togetherness:

As it was previously emphasized, the spirit of solidarity is deeply rooted in the essence of the city, a fact that is a particular example of the consequences of the earthquake in 1963. However, nowadays, attributes such as tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and understanding between citizens seem to be diminishing.

Skopje is in a position to undergo careful rejuvenation in harmony with the values of solidarity, comprehensive progress and interconnectedness. From the revitalization of public spaces to the repurposing of neglected structures, creative efforts that resonate with diverse communities have the potential to bridge gaps. By re-establishing the right of citizens to have the right to the city and providing a space for sharing joy and creativity, it is possible to orchestrate the revival of the vitality of city, intertwining strong ties between its inhabitants. Discussions, workshops, artistic projects in the community, etc., centered on the importance of cooperation in dealing with common concerns, represent a profound lesson for the arts of harmonious coexistence.

3. Renewal - rECOvering:

Skopje has witnessed a consecrated days. The turbulent and harmful urban development orchestrated by the previous city administration created divisions between the city and its population, causing deeper fractures. Some of the living green space that used to decorate the center of the city, unfortunately, is irreparably reduced. Skopje's reputation as one of the most polluted cities in Europe and the world adds another layer of concern. In order to reverse these trends and bring new life, a unified and comprehensive strategy is necessary, which will unite the various efforts of different sectors.

Our comprehensive vision is to transform into a resilient and harmonious city. Our aspiration revolves around becoming a city that preserves its view of the future with hope for the future and resolution of the present. Our goal is to nurture a city that will develop into a center for innovation and collaboration, drawing lessons from its past and avoiding repeating past mistakes. Our goal is to nurture the city with an unshakable understanding that culture requires courage - courage to expose one's true vulnerability to the world, courage to accept the unknown, courage to perceive, listen and experience the world through the perspectives of those who are different from us; the courage to empathize and to accept both our own identity and the identity of others.

4. Creation – CreARTing:

From an economic perspective, creators in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) trace their path to the future. Neglecting to engage with dynamic technological trends is tantamount to losing our place in the "future landscape". Hence, I interweave artistic genius with new technologies and science, encouraging it to rise to "creative and cultural entrepreneurship". We strive to reduce the digital gap that affects our generations, to improve access to innovative, "technologically oriented education" and to stimulate young entrepreneurial thinking. This effort gives birth to new possibilities in the field of creative industries, positioning Skopje in a prominent place on the global scene of inventive European metropolises.

5. Cultural heritage - Heritage:

The European Capital of Culture for 2028 is proof of our commitment to celebrate, promote and nurture the rich cultural heritage of our city and to share it with our European family. We believe that culture breathes life and vitality into every community, and in Skopje you can feel it for a while, it resonates in our music and creates magic in our theaters and museums, our streets, our buildings. Cultural heritage is our unity in diversity, an expression of harmony and a bridge that connects us with the entire European community. It is our identity, it reflects our values and it opens the path for a brighter future, a living proof for centuries of the various influences that shaped its cultural heritage. Skopje is not just a place, it is a treasure trove of history and culture waiting to be discovered. It's Skopje proud of its rich and varied cultural profile, which reflects its historical meaning, multicultural heritage with a contemporary face.

Regulations Entry and Scope

These regulations **come into effect on the date of their adoption by the ECoC Skopje 2028 Board** and are published on the **official website of Skopje European Capital of Culture 2028**: https://skopje2028.mk/apply/

These rules establish the following:

1. **Conditions, criteria, and procedures for awarding co-financing**
   o Defines who is eligible to apply, what costs are eligible, and how funding decisions are made.
   o Ensures transparency, fairness, and alignment with the objectives of Skopje 2028.
2. **Rights and obligations of applicants**
   o Specifies the responsibilities of beneficiaries, including project implementation, reporting, and adherence to regulations.
   o Outlines the applicants' rights regarding access to funds, support, and guidance throughout the project.
3. **Submission and evaluation of project applications**
   o Details how to submit applications, deadlines, required documents, and evaluation criteria.
   o Describes the role of evaluators, scoring system, and decision-making process.
4. **Contracting with selected beneficiaries**
   o Defines the procedure for signing contracts with approved applicants.
   o Specifies payment schedules, co-financing arrangements, and contractual obligations.
5. **Monitoring, reporting, and control of project implementation**
   o Establishes requirements for narrative and financial reporting.
   o Provides for oversight by the ECoC Skopje 2028 Board, including the right to review documentation and project activities.
   o Ensures accountability, compliance, and proper use of funds.
6. **Governance, Independence & Transparency**
   o Independent Delivery Body
   o Arm's-length principle from City politics
   o Conflict-of-interest declarations
   o Independent evaluators (EU + national)
   o Audit readiness

Who can apply? Sectors supported by Skopje 2028

1. Culture & Arts

Traditional and contemporary art forms across all disciplines:

- Architecture
- Cultural Heritage (tangible & intangible)
- Design & Applied Arts
- Literature & Reading Culture
- Music (all genres, contemporary & traditional)
- Performing Arts (theatre, dance, opera, circus, performance)
- Visual Arts (painting, sculpture, photography, multimedia)
- Fashion Design & Textile Arts
- Interdisciplinary Art & Hybrid Practices

2. Creative & Cultural Industries (CCIs)

Culture-driven industries and innovation sectors:

- Media & Creative Content (film, TV, radio, podcasting)
- Digital Arts & Creative Coding
- Architecture & Urban Design
- Craftsmanship & Artisan Practices
- Creative Entrepreneurship & Start-ups
- Cultural Production & Event Design
- XR, VR, and Immersive Media

3. Education, Research & Knowledge Development

Learning-driven and research-led cultural development:

- Cultural Education & Lifelong Learning
- Artistic Research & Practice-Based Research
- Knowledge Transfer, Workshops & Skills Development
- STEAM (Science–Technology–Engineering–Arts–Mathematics)
- Universities, Think Tanks & Independent Research Labs

4. Urban Development, Architecture & Public Space

Culture as a driver of urban transformation:

- Culture-Led Urban Regeneration
- Public Space Activation & Placemaking
- Sustainable Architecture & Urban Ecology
- Community-Based Urban Interventions
- Mobility, Accessibility & Inclusive Infrastructure

5. Tourism, Hospitality & City Branding

Culture-driven visibility and visitor engagement:

- Cultural Tourism & Heritage Trails
- Creative Tourism & Experiential Tourism
- Festivals & Large-Scale Events
- City Branding & European Positioning
- Tourism through Art (public installations, artistic routes, immersive visitor experiences)

6. Social Inclusion, Community & Civil Society

Culture as a tool for democratic participation:

- Intercultural Dialogue & Social Cohesion
- Community-Based Art & Participatory Practices
- Grassroots Initiatives & Civic Movements
- Migrant, Minority & Multicultural Participation
- Gender Equality & Social Justice

7. Economic Development, Innovation & Skills

Culture as an engine of economic transformation:

- Creative Economy & Employment
- Cultural Entrepreneurship & Business Models
- Innovation Labs & Start-Up Support
- Cultural Management & Professionalization
- Skills Development & Workforce Training

8. Youth, Sports & Intergenerational Dialogue

Culture for and with the younger generation:

- Youth Creativity & Leadership
- Youth Cultural Exchanges & Mobility
- Sports–Culture Synergies
- Intergenerational Collaboration
- New Youth Subcultures & Urban Creativity

9. International Cooperation & European Collaboration

Europe-oriented cultural partnerships:

- Cross-Border Artistic Cooperation
- European Networks & Mobility
- Co-Creation with Past/Future ECoCs
- Transnational Co-Productions

- Intercultural European Dialogue & Shared Narratives

10. Digital Transformation, Technology & AI

Future-oriented cultural innovation:

- Artificial Intelligence in Arts & Cultural Practice
- Digital Storytelling & New Media
- Virtual Production, XR/VR/AR
- Gaming Culture & Interactive Experiences
- Digital Literacy & Access to Technology

11. Ecology, Sustainability & Environmental Culture

(Strongly recommended to include — now expected by the ECoC panel)

- Environmental Art & Eco-Design
- Climate Action & Cultural Ecology
- Sustainable Production Practices
- Green Festivals & Low-Carbon Events
- Biodiversity, Nature Culture & Eco-Awareness

Eligible applicant Aries

Applicants are eligible if they are legally resident or registered in one of the following countries or territories:

The **27 European Union Member States**:
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

As well as **neighboring and partner countries** participating in European cultural cooperation:
Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Kosovo*, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Ukraine.

The call is also open to applicants from the **European Union's Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)** and **Outermost Regions (ORs)**.

Together, these countries and territories form a broad and dynamic European cultural area that supports artistic cooperation, mobility, shared European values, and cross-border cultural exchange.

Timeline
- **Open call out: 1 February 2026**
- **Deadline for proposal: 29 March 2026 (CET 23:59)**
- **Assessment of proposals: 10 - 30 April 2026**
- **Contracting: May - June 2026**
- **Project implementation: 2026–2028**

Eligible applicants
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

- EU Cultural institutions
- Artistic collectives
- Individual artists and creative professionals
- Educational and research institutions
- International partnerships

To be eligible, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. **Applicant type:** Open to artists and cultural professionals, applying individually or as part of a group or collective.
2. **Age:** Applicants must be 18 years of age or older at the time of application.
3. **Residency:** Applicants must legally reside in a Europe country, including the EU's Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) and Outermost Regions (ORs).
4. Applicants must be professionally active in the fields covering the call
5. **Professional activity:** Applicants should be able to demonstrate originality and ongoing artistic or cultural practice, such as previous work, projects, or professional engagement.
6. **Application format:** Applications may be submitted individually or jointly. Group applications must clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all participants.
7. **Language:** Applicants must be able to communicate and work in English as its international context.
8. **Availability:** Applicants must be available for the full duration of the proposed activity, including preparation, implementation, and reporting phases if applicable. It may be a subject of negotiation.
9. **Legal status:** Artists and cultural professionals are eligible provided legally residences in European country.
10. **Artistic freedom:** Projects must respect the principles of artistic freedom, inclusivity, and cultural diversity, and comply with applicable legal and ethical standards.
11. **Each applicant can only apply with one project but may also participate as a partner in other projects.**
12. **Accessibility Support for Applicants with a Disability**
13. This is a **grant-based cultural call**, not a public procurement procedure.

Accessibility support

For more information on what to upload in the activity report, please see the section Accessibility support for applicants with a disability.

Costs related to accessibility measures (sign language interpretation, captioning, audio description, physical access adaptations) are eligible and encouraged.

Additional Eligibility Criteria

- **Project relevance:** The proposed activity must have a **clear cultural or artistic purpose** and align with the objectives of the call, including **cross-cultural exchange, collaboration, or knowledge sharing**.
- **European dimension:** Applications should demonstrate a strong **European perspective**, such as cooperation across borders, co-creations, co-productions, residencies or engagement with diverse cultural contexts.
- The project contributes to the **European Capital of Culture Skopje 2028** by fostering **cross-border collaboration** and positioning Skopje as a meeting point for diverse European cultural practices.
- Through partnerships with artists and cultural professionals from different European countries, the project reflects the **European values of cultural diversity, dialogue, and cooperation** central to **ECoC Skopje 2028.**
- The initiative strengthens Skopje 2028's **European dimension** by connecting local cultural heritage with **contemporary European artistic perspectives**.
- By engaging with international audiences and collaborators, the project supports the **ECoC Skopje 2028 vision** of cultural exchange and shared European narratives.
- The project highlights Skopje as a **European cultural hub**, encouraging intercultural dialogue and project in line with the objectives of **European Capital of Culture Skopje 2028**.
- **Feasibility:** The project must be **realistic and achievable** within the proposed timeframe and budget.
- **Originality:** Proposed activities should be **original** and not primarily focused on commercial production or profit-making.
- **Ethical standards:** Applicants must commit to **ethical artistic practices**, including respect for human rights, cultural diversity, gender equality, and non-discrimination.

- **Environmental awareness:** Where applicable, projects are encouraged to consider **environmentally responsible practices** and sustainable approaches to cultural production and project.
- **Visibility and dissemination:** Applicants should be willing to **share outcomes**, such as through public presentations, exhibitions, performances, workshops, or digital platforms.
- **Compliance:** Applicants must comply with **local, national, and European regulations**, including visa, tax, and insurance requirements where relevant.

Sustainability, Accessibility & Ethics

All projects must:

- Follow environmentally responsible practices
- Adhere to EU ethical standards
- Respect human rights, diversity, and non-discrimination
- Implement accessibility for persons with disabilities
- Ensure safe collaboration with vulnerable groups

Not Eligible

- Individuals or organizations **outside Europe countries** or without legal residence in an eligible region
- Projects that are **primarily commercial or profit-driven**
- Activities **violating ethical standards**, including discrimination or disrespect for cultural diversity
- Submissions **unable to meet project timelines or participation requirements**
- Proposals that **lack a European or cross-cultural dimension** where required
- Applications submitted by judges, selection committee members, or their immediate relatives, to avoid conflicts of interest
- Projects already fully funded by other Europe calls or incompatible programs
- Activities that fail to clearly demonstrate artistic or cultural value according to the call's objectives
- Proposals pressuring or influencing evaluators in any form, including personal contact or lobbying

- Projects containing explicit political messaging, political campaigning, or politically sensitive content not aligned with the call's cultural objectives
- Capital investments (infrastructure)
- Purchase of real estate or vehicles
- Retroactive financing
- Private or personal expenses
- **Costs not directly related to the implementation of the project**

What does this public call support?

Supports projects with the following criteria:

- Explore artistic practices within a **European cultural context**, integrating **artistic research elements aligned with the vision and priorities of Skopje European Capital of Culture 2028**.
- Investigate contemporary artistic practices across Europe through **artistic research developed in dialogue with Skopje 2028** and its cultural framework.
- Develop artistic research that situates local practice within a **broader European cultural landscape**, contributing to the research-driven approach of **Skopje 2028**.
- Explore and reinterpret artistic practices through **European perspectives**, using **Skopje 2028 as a platform for artistic research, experimentation, and exchange**.

Minimum one European partner OR justified European relevance

- Co-creation (not touring)
- Partner cities from past/future ECoCs
- Mobility + local embedding

Research

- Explore artistic practices within a European cultural context
- Investigate shared themes, histories, and contemporary challenges across Europe
- Experiment with new ideas through cross-border perspectives and dialogue

Create

- Produce new artistic work inspired by European diversity and values
- Engage in innovative, interdisciplinary, and transnational creation
- Reflect European identities, narratives, and future imaginaries through art

Learn

- Exchange knowledge, skills, and methodologies with European artists and professionals
- Develop competences through education, collaboration, and peer learning
- Strengthen artistic practice through intercultural experience

Connect

- Build sustainable European professional networks
- Foster collaboration across countries, disciplines, and communities
- Reach new and diverse audiences across Europe

Preserve & Reimagine

- Safeguard European cultural traditions and heritage
- Reimagine ancestral knowledge through contemporary artistic practice
- Revitalize traditional forms for present and future generations

- Create dialogue between memory, place, and modern expression

Remember

- Honor collective memory and shared European histories
- Honor collective memory and shared Skopje histories
- Revive traditions, stories, and cultural practices
- Preserve intangible heritage through artistic interpretation

Transform

- Translate traditional forms into contemporary language
- Evolve heritage through experimentation and innovation
- Create new meanings from ancestral knowledge

Carry Forward

- Pass on cultural practices across generations
- Sustain heritage through creative continuity
- Ensure traditions remain alive and relevant

Root & Renew

- Anchor artistic practice in place and tradition
- Renew heritage through modern perspectives
- Balance preservation with creative freedom

Safeguard

- Protect European cultural heritage and craftsmanship
- Support living traditions and knowledge systems
- Strengthen cultural resilience through art

Priority Project Types

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate:

- European co-creation, co-production, or artistic exchange
- Radical artistic innovation and experimentation
- Citizen participation at co-creation or co-decision levels
- Youth-led or intergenerational cultural engagement
- Ecological and urban transformation initiatives
- Digital creativity (AI, VR, XR, interactive media, creative coding)
- Activation of public space and neighborhoods
- Linking of cultural heritage with contemporary practices
- Interventions addressing social or spatial divisions
- Inclusion of marginalized or underrepresented groups

Application Content

Each proposal must include:

A. Project Information

- Project title
- Thematic pillar(s)
- Short concept and objectives (max. 1000 characters)
- Artistic, cultural or methodological approach
- Innovation & creative experimentation

B. European Collaboration & Capacity Building

- Description of European partners and roles
- European co-creation methodology
- Artistic mobility or exchange activities
- Shared dissemination plan across Europe

C. Citizen Participation

- Target groups
- Modes of engagement (co-creation, workshops, assemblies, participatory design, etc.)
- Accessibility and inclusion measures

D. Implementation

- Timeline 2026–2028
- Partnerships: local, national, European
- Locations in Skopje
- Sustainability & green practices

E. Budget

- Indicative budget
- Co-financing (encouraged but not mandatory)
- Justification of costs

F. Expected Long-Term Impact

- European legacy
- Local social, ecological or cultural transformation
- Professional and community development outcomes

Monitoring, Reporting & Accountability

- Beneficiaries must submit:
- Narrative report
- Financial report
- Documentation of European partnership activities
- Audience participation data
- Sustainability measures
- Rider List

Project Duration

- The overall project may span 2026–2028.
- **Individuals:** 7–30 working days
- **Groups:** 7–21 working days
- Duration counts **only working days in the destination country** (travel days excluded)
- The indicated duration (7–60 working days) refers only to the physical presence or residency period in Skopje.

How to Apply

- Fill the form https://skopje2028.mk/apply/
- Submit application form
- The application must be **written and submitted personally (by you)**
- Applications submitted by others **will not be accepted**

  Before final Submission
- You can **save and edit drafts** throughout the call period
- Once submitted, **no changes are possible**

Application Language

- Applications must be **in English**
- Language level is **not evaluated**
- Write clearly so evaluators understand your project

Assessment

Applications are evaluated **by national and international experts.**

Structure of proposals

When preparing your application, choose **two objectives** your project aims to achieve and respond to the following prompts:

1. Overview of the Project (Max 1000 characters)

- Summarize the **core idea or theme** of your project.
- Outline the **intended outcomes or deliverables** (e.g., artwork, performance, exhibition, research).
- Identify the **collaborators or partners** involved.
- Specify the **audience** you aim to reach, if applicable.

2. Importance of the project ECoC Skopje 2028 (Max 1000 characters)

- Explain why **travel and residence at the destination** are essential for your project.
- Show how the project will help you **achieve your selected objectives**.
- Highlight any **unique original opportunities, resources, or environments** at the destination that are key for your work.

3. Planning and Preparation (Max 1000 characters)

- Describe the **preparatory steps** you have already taken.
- Include any **scheduled activities, meetings, or workshops**.
- For group applications, explain how you have **coordinated roles, timelines, and tasks**.
- Mention any **preparatory collaboration** with international partners, if relevant.

4. Anticipated Long-Term Results (Max 1000 characters)

- Outline the **expected impact** beyond the project period.
- Examples include: new professional connections, contracts, job opportunities, skills development, or innovative approaches to creation.

5. Sustainability Measures (Max 1000 characters)

- Describe how you will **adopt sustainable practices** during your project.
- Examples: choosing local products, reusing materials, renting equipment, or reducing environmental impact in other ways.
- Describe closing procedures after project realization.

Supporting documents

The application form then invites you to upload the required supporting document. You need to upload these in PDF format.

Identity Documents

- Provide an **ID card or other official document** that proves your identity.
- Can be **in any language**; a short explanatory note in English may be requested.
- For **group applications**, submit **one document per group member**.

Proof of Legal Residence

- Provide a **document confirming your legal registration** in your country of residence, showing your **name and full address**.
- The address must **match the one in 'Applicant Details'**.

For **group applications**, submit **one document per group member**.

Short Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A **one-page document** summarizing:

- Personal information and contact details
- Relevant education
- Professional experience
- Previous project
- Award and Certificates (if any)
- For **group applications**, provide **one CV per group member**
- **Artistic and Creative Portfolio**
- Showcases your **artistic and creative work**, including personal creations, projects, and ideas.
- For **group applications**, provide **one combined portfolio** featuring the work of all group members, even if you haven't collaborated before.

- Provide web page and other social media
- **Letter of Invitation from Your International Partner**

Sustainability and Green Practices

- Projects should **integrate sustainable and environmentally responsible practices** throughout their implementation. This can include:
- Using **eco-friendly and recycled materials** in production and design
- Minimizing **energy consumption** and choosing **renewable energy sources** when possible
- Preferring **local products and services** to reduce transport-related emissions
- Promoting **waste reduction, recycling, and reuse** of materials
- Implementing **digital solutions** to reduce paper use
- Encouraging **sustainable mobility**, such as public transport or shared transport for participants
- The aim is to ensure that projects not only achieve their artistic and cultural goals but also **reduce environmental impact** and **support long-term sustainability**.

The letter should include:

- Motivation letter
- Confirmation of their **collaboration** with you
- A **brief description** of the international partner
- The **name of the applicant** (and all group members, if applicable)
- **Project duration**, with expected start and end dates
- **Date and signature** of the international partner
- **Decision Making**
- **Eligibility Check**

- After deadline, applications are reviewed to ensure to **meet eligibility criteria**.
- If not eligible, you will receive a **notification email**.
- **Evaluation Process**

Eligible applications are evaluated by independent evaluators based on:

- **Project relevance (20%)** – Does it follow ECoC Skopje 2028 and Europe objectives?
- **Artistic relevance (15%)** - Presentation of a new work in world premiere?
- **Demonstrated capacity** for implementation in terms of budget, sustainability and accessibility (20%);
- **Preparation (10%)** – Is the project is well planned? Are roles clear? Any miss information?
- **Outcome (15%)** – Expected long-term impact on career or community.
- **Sustainability of the project (10%)** – Consideration of environmental impact (materials, energy, topics like climate or biodiversity) as well as of the team(s) for the project's characteristics, in terms of their CVs;
- **Proof of partnerships (10%)**, in terms of co-financing, artistic residencies and/or circulation, both Macedonian and international.

Financial support will be granted to the projects receiving the highest total score, as determined by the Jury, applying all criteria and considering the maximum number of projects to be supported at each funding level, as well as the total amount available for each level. Once deliberations are concluded, the jury will issue a report. All decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

Project Duration Categories

- Short-term (7–21 days): ~65% of selected projects
- Medium-term (22–39 days): ~20%
- Long-term (40–60 days): ~15%

Final Selection

- A **panel of 5 experts** (European and ECOC SKOPJE 2028) will make the final decision.
- Selection considers **quality, geographical and gender balance, sectors, experience levels, and inclusion**.

Legal Nature

This is a **grant-based cultural call**, not a public procurement procedure.

Budget Conditions – Eligible Costs

The budget may cover the following eligible expenses, provided they are directly related to the implementation of the project:

- Fees and honoraria for artistic, technical, and administrative staff
- Production costs, including materials, fabrication, scenography, and technical equipment
- Venue rental and technical support
- Travel and accommodation expenses related to project activities
- Project coordination and management costs
- Marketing, communication, and public outreach activities
- Digital tools, and technological solutions necessary for the project, as well as sustainable materials.
- Environmentally friendly materials and sustainable practices, supporting ecological responsibility
- All costs must be **reasonable, justified, and aligned with the approved project plan and budget**.

Budget Overview

Eligible Costs:

- Fees for artistic, technical, and administrative staff
- Production (materials, fabrication, scenography, technical equipment)
- Venue rental and technical support
- Travel and accommodation
- Project coordination and management
- Marketing, communications, and public activities
- Digital tools, licenses, and technological solutions
- Eco-friendly materials and sustainable practices

Ineligible Costs:

- Capital investments (long-term infrastructure)
- Purchase of real estate or vehicles
- Completed activities (retroactive financing)
- Costs not directly related to the project

Co-Financing:

- Minimum 10% of total budget (can include in-kind contributions: volunteer work, equipment, space)
- Maximum amount for request from the call: 50.000 EUR
- *Explanation:* Costs must be **directly linked to the project**, reasonable, and follow sustainability and EU cultural funding standards.

Contracting

Selected applicants sign a contract defining:

- Approved budget
- Payment installments
- Monitoring requirements
- Visibility obligations
- European partnership commitments

Payments

- 40% upon contract signature
- 40% after approved interim report
- 20% after successful completion and approval of final report.

Budget Framework

Funding Ranges

- Start-scale projects: EUR 3.000 – 10.000
- Small-scale projects: EUR 10.000 – 30.000
- Medium-scale projects: EUR 30.000 – 50.000

Eligible Costs

- Artistic fees and production
- Travel and accommodation
- Technical equipment and services

- Communication and audience engagement
- Digital tools and sustainable materials

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999

Reporting and Control

Beneficiaries are required to submit both a narrative and a financial report upon completion of the project.

The ECoC Board has the right to carry out monitoring, control, and **review** of the project's implementation, including **access to all relevant documentation** related to the project activities and finances.

Recovery of Funds

If the beneficiary **fails to implement the project in accordance with the contract**, **does not submit the required reports**, or **uses the funds improperly or for purposes other than those approved**, the **Board** has the right to **request a full or partial repayment of the co-financing**.

DATA PROTECTION

Personal data provided in the application will be **processed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation**, including the **EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**. The data will be used **solely for the purpose of managing, evaluating, and implementing the program**, and will not be shared with third parties beyond those involved in the selection and administration process. Applicants have the right to **access, rectify, or request the deletion** of their personal data in line with legal provisions.

For more information

Interested can receive additional information from 08:30 to 16:30 CET at the following address: City of Skopje - Project for **ECOC Skopje 2028**

To: Adrijana Bozinovska, City of Skopje

st. 1000 Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia, Phone: +389 70720919

Mail: ; info@skopje2028.mk