

Übermorgen – Neue Modelle für Kulturinstitutionen

Funding principles for the pilot phase

Institutions shape Germany's cultural landscape. Opera houses, museums, libraries, concert halls and theatres are havens of artistic freedom; they can be forums for participation and representation; they stimulate discussion and inspire the imagination. In a time of complex challenges, these cultural institutions carry additional social responsibilities. More than ever, they are expected to show what lies ahead. However, for many cultural institutions these expectations cause a sense of overwhelm: What will cultural centres look like in the future? How should future-oriented, flexible organisations operate? How will they manage the digital shift? Who should they collaborate with and how can they become more accessible for diverse social groups? Prioritising such problems and finding solutions for them is proving to be complex.

The two-phase federal funding programme »Übermorgen – Neue Modelle für Kulturinstitutionen« invites cultural institutions to develop substantive new strategies to enable them to take on societal challenges. Working with partners of their choice and representatives of their state or municipal government, they will prepare innovation plans for their future institutional work. During the pilot phase (June 2024 to December 2026), grants of 50,000 euros each are available to up to fifty cultural institutions, consortiums or local governments with viable innovative ideas and the motivation to change. The pilot phase also includes research trips to inspirational European cultural venues and regular forum events.

The German Federal Cultural Foundation plans to provide additional funding from 2027 onwards to continue the programme and implement selected innovation plans. This implementation phase will be open to new applicants as well as to projects that were funded as part of the pilot phase. As in the pilot phase, applicants will be selected for funding by a panel of experts based on the quality of their application documents.

1. What do we fund?

In the pilot phase, we fund the development of innovation plans for individual cultural institutions or consortiums of several organisations – based on a sound analysis of their current situation.

The purpose of the innovation plan is to effect meaningful change within the organisation (or organisations), particularly in fields such as participation, institutional flexibility, workflow or the

sustainable use of resources. Projects can set their own priorities. We expect them to respond to the challenges they face in their local area or sector, and to consider their existing organisational strengths and expertise.

We expect employees from the cultural institutions' various departments to be involved in the creation of the innovation plan, in addition to participation by external cultural policy experts, government representatives and members of the local community. Their collaboration and ongoing relationship are the cornerstones of the innovation process, even beyond the duration of the funding programme.

We do not fund ideas for artistic projects or for initiatives that are solely aimed at improving efficiency or optimising processes. We also do not fund the development or implementation of municipal cultural policy plans. The »Übermorgen« programme stipulates that its funding be used in a sustainable and environmentally responsible manner throughout the project period (including planning, implementation and evaluation).

2. Who can apply?

Individual cultural institutions, consortiums of several cultural organisations, and local authorities that are responsible for cultural institutions can apply.

To be eligible to apply, a **cultural institution** needs to:

- be based in a town or city with more than 100.000 inhabitants
- be active in the fields of performing arts, visual arts, literature or music, or be an interdisciplinary arts centre, local library, or a museum of art or cultural history
- be a flagship organisation in its city or region
- have its own venue and dedicated artistic programme
- have the necessary technical infrastructure and personnel
- be publicly funded, or alternatively be supported by or under the ownership of local, state or federal government institutions. The legal structure of the organisation (whether privately owned, non-profit, foundation or limited liability company) is irrelevant in this context.

Consortium refers to a group of several cultural organisations, either within a local area or across regional or state borders. A consortium can include organisations in smaller towns, as long as one

of the partner organisations is based in a large city. Consortiums can also include collaborations between a cultural institution and its city's independent art scene.

If a consortium does not have its own legal form, it should designate one of the partner organisations based in a large city as its lead partner and main applicant.

Local authorities of more than 100.000 inhabitants who are responsible for cultural institutions are also eligible to apply.

Institutions primarily or predominantly concerned with training, education or outreach are not eligible to apply. Special interest groups, academic libraries and organisations that only receive project-based funding are also not eligible to apply.

3. How are funded projects supported in the creation of their innovation plans?

To support the funded cultural institutions, consortiums and local authorities in the creation of their innovation plans, the programme will organise regular **future forums** and **research trips**.

Future forums impart methodological skills, expertise and examples of best practice. Participants discuss topics such as future-proofing, inclusion and participation, new organisational models, cultural leadership, spaces for culture, infrastructure, self-image and the role of cultural institutions in urban society. The future forums offer networking opportunities and the chance to exchange ideas. For the project manager of each organisation and at least one other person in a leading position (i.e. artistic director, dramaturg, curator or head of department), participation is mandatory. The future forums will take place between September 2025 and December 2026.

Research trips to inspirational European cultural venues will open new perspectives on the potential work, mission and organisation of cultural institutions. They are opportunities for decision-makers in the cultural sector, government and politics to explore pioneering initiatives all over Europe, discuss their own issues and challenges, and develop new strategies together. Only participants in funded projects can join these excursions, which are organised by Bureau Ritter. Trips will last three days and are expected to take place between September 2025 and October 2026. Successful applicants will receive details regarding destinations and organisation together with the notification of their grant.

4. How much funding is available and what costs are eligible?

The grant amount per project in the pilot phase is 50,000 euros. Direct costs related to the project and personnel costs are eligible for funding. Costs for construction projects and other investment-based activities are ineligible.

As a rule, the grant is paid on receipt of the required narrative and financial reporting documents. Successful projects will be fully funded up to the maximum grant amount. The grant is non-repayable and there is no legal right to funding.

5. How do I apply and what documents do I need to submit?

To apply, you must complete the online application form, which is available to download from the Bureau Ritter website from 3 December 2024.

The application form includes the following:

- a) Short profile of the applicant or applicants (cultural organisations or local authorities)
- b) Description of the organisation's current situation and motivation for change, taking into account the following questions:
 - What challenges do you currently face and what challenges are you expecting in five to ten years?
 - What do you hope to achieve by participating in the pilot phase? What is your motivation?
 - How do you intend to inspire the participants' imagination and visions of the future?
 - How are you planning to structure the 18-month funding period?
 - What kinds of resources (i.e. time, personnel) are you planning to commit to the pilot phase? This could be done by seconding staff to the process, or by temporarily reducing the organisation's regular programming schedule. We expect organisations to set up a team involving several departments to develop the innovation plan. A letter of confirmation to this effect from the organisation's senior management team should be submitted as part of the application.
- c) Budget;
- d) optional: one or more letters of support from potential partner organisations.

6. When is the deadline for applications?

The deadline for applications for cultural institutions, consortiums and local authorities is **14 March 2025 at 20:00**. The submission timestamp of the online application form counts as your time of submission. Your application will be evaluated solely based on your submitted documents. Applications that are not submitted on time or are incomplete cannot be considered.

7. What are the selection criteria and when can I expect a decision?

An independent panel of experts appointed by the German Federal Cultural Foundation will decide which projects are selected for funding. They are expected to make a decision in May 2025.

Assessment criteria include the following:

- Quality of the analysis of the organisation's potentials, weaknesses and challenges, both currently and in the future
- Coherence of the planned change processes, and their demonstrable necessity for the organisation's future viability
- Transferability of the identified challenges and solutions
- Evidence of motivation and willingness to engage in the desired change processes.

8. What is the earliest start date for the project and how long can it run for?

If funding has been approved, projects can start in June 2025. Grant agreements are usually signed six weeks after the submission of all necessary documents by the applicant. Grants can only be paid once the grant agreement has been signed. Projects must end on 31 December 2026.

9. What is the legal basis for funding?

The provisions outlined in the grant agreement, along with §§ 23 and 44 of the German Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the associated administrative regulations, govern key aspects including the approval, payment, and financial reporting of the grant. They also cover the verification of proper use, potential withdrawal from the grant agreement, and the reclaiming of granted funds if necessary. Additionally, the Federal Court of Auditors has the authority to conduct audits in accordance with §§ 91 and 100 of the German Federal Budget Code (BHO).

10. Who is the contractual partner for the grant agreement?

Bureau Ritter is the executive partner delivering the funding programme “Übermorgen” in collaboration with the German Federal Cultural Foundation. The grant agreement will be concluded directly with Bureau Ritter.

11. Validity of the funding principles

These funding principles came into force on 3 December 2024.

“Übermorgen – Neue Modelle für Kulturinstitutionen” is an initiative by the German Federal Cultural Foundation. It is delivered in collaboration with Bureau Ritter as the executive partner. The German Federal Cultural Foundation is funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.

