

Tips on how to find a UK partner for Circular Culture

State of your partnership > Where to start?

Be Clear About Your Festival's Objectives and Offerings: When reaching out to potential UK partners, clearly articulate your festival's objectives, scope, and what you can offer in terms of resources, expertise, and opportunities for collaboration. Highlight any unique aspects of your festival that may be of interest to UK partners.

Brainstorm within your team after reviewing the open call guidelines to set expectations. Be prepared to exchange information that allows the UK partner to gain an understanding of the context in which you work and the audiences you engage with. Be bold yet realistic and keep your audiences in mind when drafting the collaboration.

Collaborate with Existing Partners: If you have existing partnerships or contacts in the UK, leverage their networks and ask for recommendations or introductions to potential collaborators. Personal referrals can often lead to meaningful partnerships.

Network within the Industry: Engage with professional networks and associations within the cultural sector, both locally and internationally. Reach to other colleagues who work internationally to get references and advice. Attend industry-specific events, workshops, and seminars where you can meet UK arts professionals and explore collaboration opportunities.

Research UK Arts Organisations: Start by researching UK-based arts organisations, collectives, and artists that align with your festival's themes, objectives, and artistic disciplines. Use online platforms such as Arts Council England's directory, Culture24, or ArtsProfessional to identify potential partners.

Attend Virtual or In-person Events: Participate in virtual or in-person cultural events, festivals, and conferences taking place in the UK. These events offer excellent networking opportunities to engage with UK arts professionals and explore potential collaborations.

Utilise Online Platforms: Make use of online platforms dedicated to cultural exchange and collaboration, such as Creative Europe's Partner Search tool, Culture360, or Artsy. These platforms enable you to search for UK partners based on specific criteria and interests.

Utilise Social Media: Leverage social media platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to connect with UK-based arts organisations, collectives, and artists. Follow relevant hashtags and join groups or forums related to your festival's focus area to expand your network.

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Make contact: Either by email or an DM, share your intention to apply to Circular Culture and the main reason to approach the artist/organisation and set up a meeting to talk further. Be clear about the timeframe, both regarding the open call and the festival execution. Before the meeting, prepare the topics you will discuss artistic collaboration model, resources (economic and in-kind), timeline, others.

Prepare for the meeting and after the meeting, recap points agreed upon and further your research. Try to outline the terms and roles of the participants, as well as responsibilities. Schedule meetings, exchange ideas, and explore ways to collaborate effectively throughout the application process.

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Create a check list: Share with your partner the documents you will need for the open-call and set up a shared agenda. Be sure that your collaboration is clear on both sides and that everyone knows what they need to deliver before the application deadline.

Follow up and Maintain Communication: Proactively follow up with your UK partners and keep communication channels open to discuss outcomes.

Suggested websites of associations and artistic collectives in the United Kingdom

- Association of Independent Festivals (AIF): <https://aiforg.com/>
- Association of Independent Music: <https://www.aim.org.uk/>
- British Underground: <https://www.britishunderground.net/>
- Jazz re:freshed: <https://www.jazzrefreshed.com/>
- British Film Institute: <https://www.bfi.org.uk/>
- Visual Artists Association: <https://visual-artists.org/>
- Arts Council England: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>
- Arts Council of Wales: <https://arts.wales/>
- Creative Scotland: <https://www.creativescotland.com/>