

The CRI Contributions to Reinventing Imaginations

Bourges 2028 call for projects

**Handbook
Free choice of theme 2025**

PREAMBLE

Bourges 2028 is launching the **CRI, Contributions to Reinventing Imaginations** – a cry for joy, a clarion call and a collective, powerful energy all in one, aimed at bringing people together for the joint project that is Bourges 2028. These contributions will enable each individual to actively participate and have the capacity to innovate in regional areas, paving new creative pathways outside cities and reinventing our rural areas to meet the challenges of our time. We suggest everyone pitch in to something that is not yet concrete, something we need to design together, because, through Bourges 2028, we can do just that.

The CRI will be **open and accessible to as many people as possible**, and organised by category and theme, in order to obtain proposals aligned with the overall Bourges 2028 project. We're looking for **projects important to regional areas and their residents**. Each project must be sustainable, low-carbon and promoting harmony with the living world; the aim is to **raise awareness**. CRI projects must similarly **leave a mark, a trace, for the younger generations and for regional development**. They need to last into, or be repeated or held in, 2028 and indeed even beyond. They may facilitate new engineering in underexplored fields and encourage the establishment of educational pathways in these subjects, particularly as part of the cultural and creative industries (low-carbon design or mobility, rural culture, new digital setting, artificial intelligence...). It must be possible for them to be moved to other regional areas so that Bourges 2028 can benefit as many people as possible and deliver innovative solutions for everyone.

The defining feature of the Bourges 2028 CRI is the fact that it gives candidates time to develop their project and boost skills among all project leaders and regional areas. All CRI candidates must initially register and briefly describe their project. Bourges 2028 will then set about welcoming, advising, supporting and assisting them by organising collective, expert-led workshops enabling them to push ahead with drafting up their project, improve it and expand it. The final submission will be made upon completion of the Academy phase. As such, there will only be one CRI per year, so as to allow for this 5-month support period.

The projects presented must uphold the Bourges 2028 values in every aspect:

- **Respect and give priority to the living world, humans and nature** so as to effect the changes vital to protecting the planet's habitability by virtue of their paradigm-shifting abilities. Bourges needs to be the first **low-carbon** European Capital of Culture, because the environmental challenges we face need to trigger a response from all parties involved.
- Create small and medium-sized towns, places where everyone senses and plays their own important role, where people can design their lives **in human-scale cities**.
- **Leverage civic involvement** to develop regions, to breathe life into cities and rural areas, to establish democracy and make it more accessible.
- Devote their entire capacity to **the youth and celebration, to equality and diversity**, to ensure Bourges 2028 is welcoming, festive and dynamic.
- Promote **the arts, creation, research and innovation**. The aim of Bourges 2028 is to create a contemporary, trailblazing artistic space.

CANDIDATE CRITERIA

Who can apply as a candidate?

The project leader applying as a candidate for the CRI must have a SIRET number. They can therefore be a creative artist, an association, a business, an administrative establishment...

There will be a particular focus on project leaders who would most benefit from the Academy and financial support. Certified cultural establishments will thus not be considered a priority.

Regional communities (including their services) cannot apply as candidates for the CRI, except for villages with populations of less than 5000 and which are not financing Bourges 2028.

The state and its services cannot apply as candidates for the CRI.

Businesses may apply as candidates, unless they are sponsors of Bourges 2028.

Project leaders must be based in the Centre-Val de Loire region or in one of the 'pillar cities' (Angoulême, Avignon, Béthune, Guingamp, Nevers).

Foreign project leaders or project leaders from outside the aforementioned areas wishing to apply as candidates for the 'CRI free choice of theme' must team up with a local project leader, who will manage the candidate application and project.

Project themes

The project must be a cultural or art project involving the creation or circulation of works, and must uphold the values and guiding principles of Bourges 2028 (see preamble).

All disciplines of art are eligible and may be combined: Music, Dance, Theatre, Street Arts, Circus Arts, Performance, Sculpture, Painting, Installation, Drawing, Photography, Digital Art, Heritage, Literature, Poetry, Comics/Cartoons, Video, Cinema, Food, Craftsmanship...

Construction projects aimed at renovation, extension or refurbishment, acquisition of works or investment are ineligible.

Each project must register under one or more of the following themes:

- Combating global warming
- Preserving biodiversity and the rights of nature
- The Symbiocene
- Art in rural spaces
- The democratic space
- Music and celebration
- Renewed heritage
- Responsible eating and drinking
- Arts & crafts and design
- Artificial intelligence and digital art
- Youth challenges
- Cultural rights
- Cultural diversity
- Health and culture
- Culture and inclusion

Where and when does the project need to take place?

The project needs to take place:

- In a city or rural area in the Centre-Val de Loire region,
- And/or in one of the 'pillar cities' (Angoulême, Avignon, Béthune, Guingamp, Nevers),
- And/or in a European Capital of Culture abroad (must have hosted between 2023 and 2028).

A project may commence from 1 January 2025: concept design, preparation, production. Some phases of creation and execution may also take place in 2026 and 2027.

However, it is imperative the project has an impact in 2028: creation, circulation, visibility in 2028 or lasting/repeating until 2028.

Priority will be given to projects capable of continuing or having impacts beyond 2028.

SCHEDULE AND HOW TO REGISTER

Schedule

This call for projects will be held in 2025, 2026 and 2027, following the same schedule:

- 15 March: Registration launch
- 15 April: Registration deadline
- 1 May to 13 July: Academy phase
- 30 September: Deadline for submitting projects, for registered project leaders who have completed the Academy phase
- October and November: Project reviews and judging-panel discussions
- 13 December: Announcement of winners.

Registration

Candidates may register online (at www.bourges2028.org) or at the Bourges 2028 headquarters (36 rue Moyenne). Registration will involve completing a quick and easy form and briefly describing the project. The form will be available in French and English.

A project leader may only register once a year and only lodge one submission a year.

No selections will be made at the time of registration, except in relation to three criteria:

- The project must be a cultural or art project.
- The project must uphold the Bourges 2028 values.
- The project leader must be based in the Centre-Val de Loire region or in one of the 'pillar cities' (Angoulême, Avignon, Béthune, Guingamp, Nevers).

Bourges 2028 reserves the right to limit or restrict registrations at any time.

After registering, the project leaders will receive confirmation of their registration, as well as Academy invitations and details of the Academy organisation structure, by email.

THE ACADEMY

The defining feature of the Bourges 2028 CRI is the fact that it gives project leaders time to develop their project and boost skills across the regional area. It is a freely accessible opportunity for networking among project leaders, for co-creation and, with a view to generating added value, for giving each registered project leader their chance.

Each project leader must complete the 6 workshops that make up the Academy phase. Each workshop will last approx. 3 hours. The exact schedule of the Academy phase and its workshops (dates, times, locations, remote tools...) will be advised in the registration form and confirmed by email.

The workshops will be run face-to-face (in Bourges) and remotely: project leaders will thus be able to choose between the two options. The workshops will be run solely in French.

The project leader must appoint the person(s) due to attend the Academy (1 person only per workshop and per leader). These may thus be different people, depending on the theme or workshop dates.

In a bid to encourage collaboration or indeed pooling of projects, the list of project leaders registered for that year's Academy, their contact details and a description of their project will be circulated to all project leaders during the first workshop.

The workshops will be as follows:

① The '**How to prepare your Bourges 2028 CRI project**' workshop will be run by Bourges 2028. It will enable project leaders to see the anticipated final rendering of their submission, as well as understand the criteria used by the judging panel to assess the project. It will also focus on the project leaders' needs in terms of structuring and professional training.

② The '**Finding local, national and European partners**' workshop is designed to help leaders of cultural and art projects develop and diversify their network. Its focus is on teaching the keys to

identifying and approaching potential partners at different levels: local, national and European. The aim is to demonstrate the importance of transborder collaboration and networking, and to encourage participants to get involved with projects at a European level to enhance their artistic endeavours and increase their impact.

③ The **'Build your budget and ask for European funding'** workshop seeks to assist leaders of cultural and art projects in formulating a solid, realistic budget. It will address the main principles of budgeting, essential accounting elements and the expenditure items not to be ignored (particularly artist remuneration). The focus will be on the importance of formulating realistic revenue forecasts, while exploring the various sources of financing available, including European funding, to support and develop their project at an international level.

④ The **'Artist remuneration, labour rights and intellectual-property rights'** workshop aims to raise awareness among leaders of cultural and art projects in terms of fairly recognising the worth of artistic work. It will focus on reiterating the fundamental principles of artist remuneration, artists' labour rights in France and Europe, and the challenges of intellectual-property law. This workshop will enable participants to better understand the importance of protecting creations, while ensuring decent and fair working conditions for artists, whether in a professional or hobbyist context.

⑤ The **'Incorporating a low-carbon approach into your project'** workshop invites leaders of cultural and art projects to reflect on the current environmental issues and the specific challenges of the cultural sector. Through discussions and practical tools, participants will be guided on how to incorporate concrete, sustainable solutions into their project concept. The aim is to encourage them to rethink their cultural and artistic approach by considering the environmental impact, thus enabling them to propose projects actively committed to the environmental transition.

⑥ The **'Event organisation and mandatory procedures'** workshop is focused on the practical and operational aspects of carrying out cultural projects at a European level. It will cover the essential administrative procedures for holding events, particularly transnational events, as well as the mobility and translation solutions necessary for facilitating dialogue across Europe. The aim is to equip project leaders with specific tools to effectively manage the logistical and regulatory constraints and successfully execute their initiatives at a local and European level.

FINAL SUBMISSION AND JUDGES' DECISION

Contents of the final submission

The final submission must be lodged via a specific platform before 30 September of that year. It will consist of:

- A detailed presentation of the structure
- A detailed presentation of the project (name, theme, programme, content, target territory, target audience, assessment method, pricing policy...)
- A detailed project schedule
- A list detailing the associated partners, accompanied by a statement signed by each partner.
- A provisional annual and multi-year
- Several detailed appendices on the project leader's commitments (low-carbon, accessibility...)

Form details will be advised at the first Academy workshop.
The form will be available in English and French.

The judging panel

The make-up of the judging panel will be as follows:

- 50% B28 management and project art teams;
- 20% representatives of the European Citizens' Council;
- 10% representatives of the Youth Regional Council;

- 10% representatives of persons with access limitations;
- 10% administrative representatives of the regional communities due to host the projects.

Several judging panels will be called on, based on the relevant project specifications.

Assessment criteria applied by the judging panel

The project must uphold the values and general approaches of the Bourges 2028 project (see preamble) in every respect:

- **Make small and medium-sized cities territories of the future, respecting life, humans and nature;**
- **Deliver low-carbon solutions to all aspects of the project;**
- **Facilitate civic involvement;**
- **Promote the arts, creation and innovation.**

The incorporation of **youth, diversity, accessibility** and **equality** aspects will similarly be an essential criterion. The diversity aspect will be assessed in terms of the project leaders, the project itself and the target audience alike.

The project's **European dimension** – being carried out in a European country, having European partners, European financing, European artists, a European audience or participants, a European theme... – will be an important criterion. The association can be with any EU country or EU candidate country, regardless of whether or not it has a European Capital of Culture.

Projects having an impact beyond 2028 and/or offering sustainable solutions for the region and fostering long-term transformations will be given priority. These may particularly be precursor projects to future educational pathways due to be developed across the region.

The project may be free or paid. For paid events, the accessibility, consistency and weighting of prices in terms of the target audience will be a judging criterion.

Fair remuneration of artists will similarly be an important assessment criterion.

The project's multi-partnership and multi-source-financing aspects will be assessed; the project must rally as much support as possible and encourage connections between organisations and regions.

The Academy phase is an opportunity for all candidates, and attendance will be a judging criterion.

When lodging the final submission in September, the project leader must include a written confirmation from all partners (financial, technical, artistic partners etc.), confirming their involvement in the project, as well as the project's technical feasibility (host-venue owners' opinion, project scope, legal and regulatory capacity...). These elements will be decisive factors in the judging panel's ability to assess each participating party's level of involvement and in Bourges 2028 ensuring there are no problems caused to the impacted entities in the event the project ends up being a winning CRI submission.

PROJECT LIFE CYCLE AND CONTRACTUAL CLAUSES

For all leaders of CRI candidate projects

In all cases, the project leader will be responsible for the project they are managing and organising. They recruit the partners (artistic, technical, financial partners etc.), follow all the mandatory procedures and will be the sole party responsible in the event their obligations are not fulfilled. They also ensure compliance with laws and regulations, particularly in terms of labour law.

For the CRI winners

The CRI winners determined by the judging panel will receive financial backing from Bourges 2028.

The exact amount will depend on the quality of the project, its adherence to the aforementioned values, criteria and objectives of Bourges 2028, and the running costs listed in the project's provisional budget, sent as part of the final submission.

The amount set by the judging panel and allocated to the project will be the total, one-off amount, regardless of the project's duration or how often it is repeated.

Bourges 2028's aid, support and involvement in the project will be limited to financial support based on the judging panel's decisions. Bourges 2028 will not be held liable as part of the project's execution. Bourges 2028 will not have any involvement in the project's setup or artistic design, nor will it contribute any human or technical resources as part of the project.

An agreement governing the financial support will be established: full payment of the financial support will be contingent on the project's successful execution. Following the judging panel's decision, Bourges 2028 will not be able to increase its support in the event the project budget changes.

The financial support from Bourges 2028 is not a substitute for general financing permitted under ordinary law. On the contrary, multi-source financing is encouraged. In the final submission, the project leader will outline their strategy for handling financial loss, other than relying on Bourges 2028's backing.

An audit will be conducted in 2029 to check the financial support is being used appropriately.

[For officially certified project leaders](#)

In its decision-making, the judging panel may also officially certify projects. These projects will not receive any financial support from Bourges 2028, but will be incorporated into Bourges 2028's general communications. There will be an agreement in place governing this certification.

[For project leaders rejected by the judging panel](#)

In the event the judging panel rejects a submission, the reason for this will be explained and justified in the reply email. In such cases, the project leader will remain the owner and party responsible for the project, and may choose to keep designing and carrying out the project without Bourges 2028's support.

In the event a project is relevant but not fully developed, the judging panel may, as an exception, allow a non-winning project to be represented in the following year's CRI, provided substantial progress has been made and the judging panel's comments have been taken into account. This exceptional authorisation will be clearly mentioned in the reply email and will apply solely to the projects indicated by the judging panel.