

CRI

Contributions to Reinventing Imaginations

Bourges 2028 Call for Projects

Project Guidelines
CRI for Young people

PREAMBULE

In autumn 2024, Bourges 2028 launched the **CRI. Contributions to Reinventing Imaginations**: a call that is once a cry of joy, a cry of warning, and a powerful collective energy bringing everyone together around the shared project that Bourges 2028 represents. These contributions are intended to enable everyone to take an active part, foster innovation across local areas, open up new pathways for creative beyond major metropolitan centres, and help reimagine our region in response to today's challenges. We invite everyone to contribute to something that is not fixed, something that must be built together – something Bourges 2028 makes possible.

The CRI initiative is designed to be open, **thematic and accessible to as many people as possible**, and themed, in order to generate proposals that resonate with the overall vision of Bourges 2028. We are looking for **projects that truly matter to the region and its residents**. Every project must be designed to be sustainable, low-carbon and in harmony with the living world, with the aim of **raising awareness**. Projects resulting from the CRI must **also leave a lasting legacy for younger generations and for the development of the region**. They should endure over time, be repeatable, or take place in 2028 and potentially beyond. They may contribute to developing expertise in underexplored fields and encourage the creation of training pathways in these areas, particularly within the Creative and Cultural Industries (low-carbon mobility or design, rural culture, new forms of digital scenography, artificial intelligence, etc.). They must be transferable to other regions so that Bourges 2028 can benefit as many people as possible and provide innovative solutions for all.

A distinctive feature of the Bourges 2028 CRI programme is that it gives applicants time to refine their projects, while also building skills among project leaders and across the region. As a first step, applicants must register with a brief description of their project. Bourges 2028 will then welcome, advise and support them through collective workshops led by experts, helping them to strengthen and develop their proposals.

Projects submitted must fully reflect the values of Bourges 2028:

- **Respect and give priority to living beings, people and nature**, in order to encourage the profound changes needed to preserve the habitability of the planet by shifting paradigms. Bourges aims to become the **first low-carbon** European Capital of Culture, responding collectively to ecological challenges.
- Make small and medium-sized towns places where everyone matters and feels important, where people can shape their own lives, **in human-scale towns and rural areas**.
- **Make citizen participation** a driver of regional development, for urban and rural living, strengthening democracy and making it more accessible.
- Giving pride of place to **youth and celebration, promoting gender equality and diversity**, so that Bourges 2028 is welcoming, festive and dynamic.

Highlight **the arts, creativity, research and innovation**, so that Bourges 2028 is contemporary and forward-looking artistic space.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

[Who can apply?](#)

Anyone aged 15 to 29 can apply (from 15th birthday until the day before their 30th birthday).

Young people applying for the CRI for Young People must be members of an organisation with a SIRET number (artist-author, association, company, etc.)

Companies may apply, except those acting as sponsors of Bourges 2028.

Project leaders must be resident in the Centre-Val de Loire region and/or in one of the towns belonging to the Matrix network (<https://bourges2028.org/la-matrice-2/>).

The same project may not be submitted by the artist or cultural organisation to another Bourges 2028 CRI call for projects.

Project themes

Projects must be artistic or cultural in nature and involve either the creation or dissemination of artistic work. It has to align with the values and objectives of Bourges 2028 (see preamble).

All artistic disciplines are permitted and may be combined, including: Music, Dance, Theatre, Street Arts, Circus Arts, Performance, Sculpture, Painting, Installation, Drawing, Photography, Digital Art, Heritage, Literature, Poetry, Comics, Video, Film, Food, and Crafts.

Projects involving building works, renovation, expansion, acquisition of artworks or capital investment will not be eligible.

Each project must address one or more of the following themes:

- Ecological transition
- Art in rural spaces
- Spaces of democracy
- Music and celebration
- Renewed heritage
- Sustainable food practices
- Crafts and Design
- Artificial intelligence and digital art
- Youth challenges
- Cultural rights
- Cultural diversity
- Health and culture
- Culture and inclusion

Where and when projects must take place

Projects must take place

- in a town or area of the Centre-Val de Loire Region
- and/or in one of the towns belonging to the Matrix network.

The project proposed by the project leader can begin from 1 January 2026, including the phases of design, preparation and production. Certain creation phases may also take place during 2026 and 2027.

However, the project must have an impact in 2028, through: creation, presentation or dissemination, public visibility in 2028, or continuity and repeatability up to 2028

Priority will be given to projects that can continue or have an impact beyond 2028.

TIMELINE AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Key dates

The call for projects will be conducted according to the following schedule:

- 16 March: Registration launch
- 15 June: Application deadline
- from 16 March to 30 August: Support from Info Jeunes (optional)
- In June: Mandatory special youth workshop on ecological transition and accessibility
- From mid-May to the end of June: running of the Academy (optional)
- 30 August: Deadline for submission of full project proposals
- 30 September: Project presentations to the jury
- 30 October: Announcement of the winners

How to apply

Applications must be submitted online via the dedicated platform accessible via our website www.bourges2028.org (CRI section). Each project leader must create an applicant account and complete a short application form providing a brief description of their project. The form will be available in French.

A project leader may submit only one application per year.

At the registration stage, eligibility will be assessed according to four criteria:

- the project representative must be aged 15–29;
- the project must be artistic or cultural;
- the project must align with the values of Bourges 2028;
- the project leader must be resident in the Centre-Val de Loire region.

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

After registration, project leaders will receive confirmation by email along with details of the support programme.

SUPPORT FROM INFO JEUNES AND THE CRI ACADEMY

A distinctive feature of the Bourges 2028 CRI programme is that it gives project leaders time to develop and refine their projects, while also building skills across the region. This support programme is free of charge and enables project leaders to connect with one another, collaborate and, with a view to adding value, gives every project leader the best possible chance of success.

1. Support from Bourges 2028 Incubators and Youth Information Points in the Centre-Val de Loire region (optional)

Applicants for the CRI for Young People will be able to register and take part in a dedicated support programme, designed and run by Info Jeunes Centre-Val de Loire

The programme has two complementary support phases.

The aim of the first phase is to enable project leaders to build their skills in developing a cultural project, by working on methodological, technical and financial aspects. The duration, intensity and format of the support will be adapted to the maturity of the project and the skills of each developer, to ensure that the CRI for Young People is accessible to as many people as possible.

At the end of this phase, project leaders will submit their final proposal and present it to the jury. These stages will enable a jury to select the projects to be included in the Bourges European Capital of Culture 2028 programme.

The aim of the second support phase is to follow the selected projects through to completion. Developers will then become residents of the Bourges 2028 Incubators, giving them access to creative workspaces, as well as tailored professional support.

Support and guidance

The Bourges 2028 Incubators aim to provide young artists, project leaders and creative collectives with a supportive environment for guidance and experimentation within the local Info Jeunes centres and their mobile outreach facilities

This network, comprising six regional InfoLabs in seven towns (Bourges, Orléans, Tours, Blois, Chartres, Le Blanc and Vierzon) and three InfoTrucks, covers the whole of the Centre-Val de Loire region, in both urban and rural areas. It provides a key entry point for young people wishing to engage with the European Capital of Culture initiative. The support offered is delivered through several complementary strands:

Communication, information and awareness-raising initiatives implemented at regional level, spaces for exchange and dialogue (events, InfoTrucks, streaming activities and public initiatives), in close collaboration with local networks of organisations and community stakeholders.

Individual and group mentoring sessions to help projects progress in terms of their design, structuring and presentation, drawing on the methods developed by the regional InfoLabs.

Access to the equipment and material resources of Info Jeunes structures and their cultural partners, to support the artistic and creative development of projects.

Support for the production and dissemination of works, with opportunities to access venues and platforms for public presentation (exhibitions, concerts, theatres, interventions in public spaces), leading up to 2028.

2. Mandatory workshop for all CRI for Young People project leaders: All project leaders registered for the CRI for Young People call must take part in a two-hour workshop on ecological transition and accessibility. This workshop will be offered both face-to-face and remotely.
3. The Academy accessible to all (optional)

Each project leader can attend six workshops, making up the Academy.

Each workshop will last around three hours. The exact schedule for the Academy and its workshops (dates, times, locations, remote connection tools, etc.) will be specified on the platform.

Workshops will be delivered both face-to-face (in Bourges) and remotely: project leaders will be able to choose between the two. The sole language will be French.

The workshops will be as follows:

- ① The workshop "**How to prepare your project for the Bourges 2028 CRI**" will be delivered by Bourges 2028. It will enable project leaders to understand the expected final format of their application and the criteria the jury will use to assess their proposals. It will also highlight the need to structure and professionalise project development.
- ② The "**Finding local, national and European partners**" workshop is designed to help cultural and artistic project leaders develop and diversify their networks. The aim is to provide the keys to identifying and approaching potential partners at different levels: local, national and European. The aim is to demonstrate the importance of cross-border collaboration and networking, and to encourage participants to take part in projects with a European dimension to enrich their artistic approach and broaden their impact.
- ③ The "**Building your budget and applying for European funding**" workshop is designed to guide cultural and artistic project leaders in drawing up a solid, realistic budget. It will cover the main principles of budget construction, the essential accounting elements and the expenditure lines that should not be overlooked (particularly artists' remuneration). Emphasis will be placed on the importance of establishing realistic revenue forecasts, while exploring the various sources of funding available, including European funds, to support and develop their project at the international level.
- ④ The "**Artists' remuneration, social and intellectual rights**" workshop aims to raise awareness among cultural and artistic project leaders of the need for fair recognition and remuneration of artistic work. The aim is to review the fundamental principles of artists' remuneration, the social rights to which they are entitled in France and Europe, and the challenges of intellectual property law. This workshop will help participants better understand the importance of protecting creative works while ensuring dignified and fair working conditions for artists, whether in a professional or amateur context.
- ⑤ The workshop "**Integrating a low-carbon approach into your project**" invites cultural and artistic project leaders to reflect on current environmental issues and the specific challenges facing the cultural sector. Through discussion and practical tools, participants will be guided in incorporating concrete, sustainable solutions into their project design. The aim is to encourage participants to rethink their artistic and cultural practices in light of environmental impact, enabling them to develop projects that actively contribute to the ecological transition.
- ⑥ The "**Event organisation and mandatory procedures**" workshop focuses on the practical and operational aspects of carrying out cultural projects with a European dimension. It will cover the key administrative procedures required to organise events, particularly transnational ones, as well as the mobility and translation solutions needed to facilitate exchanges across Europe. The aim is to provide project leaders with practical tools for effectively managing logistical and regulatory constraints, and ensuring the smooth running of their initiatives at local and European level.

FINAL APPLICATION AND JURY DECISION

Contents of the final application

The final application must be submitted via the applicant's area on the online platform before 30 August of the relevant year. It must include:

- A detailed description of the organisation
- A detailed description of the project (title, theme, implementation plan, content, target territory, target audience, evaluation method, pricing policy, etc.)
- A detailed project timeline
- A list of project partners, including a signed letter of commitment from each partner
- A projected annual and multi-year budget
- Supporting appendices outlining the project leader's commitments, particularly regarding low-carbon practices and accessibility

Jury composition

The jury will be composed as follows:

- 50% representatives from the Bourges 2028 leadership and the artistic teams involved in the projects;
- 30% representatives from the Regional Youth Council;
- 10% representatives of underserved or marginalised audiences
- 10% administrative representatives of partner local authorities and the Info Jeunes network

Several juries may be convened depending on the number of applications received.

Jury interview

The project leader will be required to present their project orally to the jury. The presentation will last a maximum of 20 minutes, during which the project leader will explain their intention and motivation. The presentation can be supported by additional materials (such as a PowerPoint presentation or a video).

Project leaders will receive an invitation specifying the date, time and directions to the interview venue at least one month before the date of the scheduled interview.

The invitation will be sent to the project leader by email and made available in the applicant's online account.

Jury evaluation criteria

Projects must fully comply with the values and overall objectives of the Bourges 2028 programme (see preamble):

- **Position small and medium-sized towns as territories of the future, respectful of living systems, people and nature;**
- **Provide low-carbon solutions for all aspects of the project;**
- **Enable citizen participation;**
- **Promote the arts, creativity and innovation.**

Particular attention will also be given to the consideration of **young people, diversity, accessibility** and **gender equality**. Diversity will be assessed in relation to project leaders, the project itself and the audiences targeted.

The European dimension of the project will be an important criterion: implementation in a European country, European partners, European funding, European artists, European audience or participants, European theme, etc. Partnerships may involve any EU or candidate country, with or without a European Capital of Culture.

Priority will be given to projects that will have an impact after 2028, and/or that propose sustainable solutions for the region, contributing to long-term transformation. This may include, in particular, projects that pioneer new training pathways to be developed within the region.

Projects may be free of charge or ticketed for audiences. In the case of ticketed events, the jury will assess the affordability, coherence and accessibility of ticket prices, taking into account the targeted audiences.

Fair remuneration of artists will also be an important criterion.

Projects demonstrating multiple partnerships and diversified sources of funding will be particularly valued. Projects should bring together a wide range of supporters and encourage collaboration between organisations and across territories.

The Academy is an opportunity for all applicants, and regular participation will also be taken into account by the jury.

Jury decisions

The jury will inform candidates of its decisions no later than three weeks after the interview with the project leader.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS

For all applicants to the CRI for Young People

In all cases, the project leader is responsible for the project they organise and implement. They must: mobilise partners (artistic, technical, financial, etc.), complete all required procedures, and will be solely responsible in the event of failure to meet their obligations. They must also ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly labour law.

For CRI for Young People co-produced projects

The winners of the CRI, chosen by the Jury, will receive financial support from Bourges 2028.

The amount awarded will depend on the quality of the project, its alignment with the values, criteria and objectives set out above, and the operating expenses included in the projected project budget submitted in the final application.

The sum deliberated by the jury and awarded to the project will be a single, fixed amount, regardless of the duration or repeatability of the project, and will be awarded under the following conditions:

- financing of up to 80% of total project costs
- up to a maximum of €10,000 per project.

Bourges 2028's support and involvement in the project will be limited to financial support in accordance with the jury's deliberations. Bourges 2028 cannot be held responsible for the implementation of the project. Bourges 2028 will not be involved in the artistic design or implementation of the project. No technical or human resources will be provided by Bourges 2028 for the implementation of the project.

Financial support will be formalised through a co-production agreement, and the full payment of the grant will be conditional upon the successful implementation of the project. Once the jury decision has been made, Bourges 2028 will not increase funding even if the project budget changes. In the final application, the project leader must outline their strategy in the event another funding source (other than Bourges 2028) is withdrawn.

An audit will be carried out in 2029 to ensure that the financial support has been properly used.

[For developers of labelled projects](#)

During its deliberations, the jury may also decide to award a label to certain projects. These projects will not receive financial support from Bourges 2028, but will be included in Bourges 2028's global communication campaign. This label will also be formalised through an agreement.

[For projects not selected by the jury](#)

If the jury issues an unfavourable decision, the refusal will be explained in the response letter. In this case, the project leader retains ownership of and responsibility for the project and may choose to continue designing and building the project without the support of Bourges 2028.