

**CRI**  
**Contributions to Reinventing Imaginations**

**Bourges 2028 Call for Projects**

**Project Guidelines**  
**Neighbourhoods in Action**  
*Support for Local Initiatives in Priority Urban Neighbourhoods*

**Bourges 2028 – European Capital of Culture – Non-profit association (French law 1901)**  
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## 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**.
- **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?

Project leaders applying to the CRI must hold a SIRET number.

Project leaders can therefore be artist-authors, associations, companies, or other organisational structures.

Particular consideration will be given to project leaders for whom the Academy and the financial support would be most beneficial. **Officially recognised cultural organisations will therefore not be given priority.**

Organisations that received CRI funding in 2025 will also not be prioritised.

Local authorities (including their departments) are not eligible to apply to the CRI. The French

State and its departments are not eligible to apply to the CRI.

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/>)

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 be projects for the creation or dissemination of works, and must 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:

- Culture and inclusion
- Art in public space

## Where, when and how the project will take place

The project must take place in a "**Priority Urban Neighbourhood**" (QPV) of a town in the Centre-Val de Loire region or a town belonging to the Matrix network.

The project must be co-developed with residents of the QPV, following an approach based on citizen participation.

Projects may begin from 1 January 2026, including the phases of design, preparation and production. Certain creation phases may also take place during 2027. **However, the project must**

**have a clear 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. Territorial impact and long-term sustainability will be key criteria.

## TIMELINE AND APPLICATION PROCESS

### Key dates

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

- 16 March: Pre-registration opens
- 19 April: Pre-application deadline
- From mid-May to the end of June: Running of the Academy
- 30 September: Deadline for submission of projects, for project leaders who have applied and completed the Academy
- October and November: Project review and jury deliberations
- 13 December: Announcement of the winners.

### How to apply

Applications must be submitted online via the dedicated platform accessible via our website [www.bourges2028.org](http://www.bourges2028.org) (CRI section). Each project leader must create an applicant account.

The form will be available in French.

A project leader may submit only one application per year. Only projects meeting the following criteria may be entered:

- Project leaders must hold a SIRET number
- Project leaders must be resident in the Centre-Val de Loire region or in one of the towns belonging to the Matrix network
- The project must be artistic or cultural in nature, involving either the creation or dissemination of a work
- The project must fall within one of the two proposed themes
- The project must be carried out in a QPV of the Centre-Val de Loire region or in a town belonging to the Matrix network
- The project must include a citizen participation approach
- The project must reflect the values of Bourges 2028.

**Bourges 2028 reserves the right to limit or restrict applications at any time.** All application requests will be validated by Bourges 2028 before applicants may proceed to register for the Academy and subsequently submit the final application.

# THE 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.

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. All workshops are mandatory, and some will be offered at "beginner" or "advanced" level (at the discretion of the project leader).

The project leader must designate the person(s) who will attend the Academy (only one person per workshop and per project). Different individuals may therefore attend different workshops, depending on the topic or the dates.

To encourage collaboration and potential project partnerships, the list of project leaders registered for that year's Academy, their contact details and a description of their project will be shared with all project leaders at the first workshop.

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 September 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 or multi-year budget
- Supporting appendices outlining the project leader's commitments, particularly regarding low-carbon practices and accessibility

Details of the form will be presented at the first Academy workshop.

### Jury composition

The jury will be composed as follows:

- 50% representatives from the Bourges 2028 team and cultural sector professionals;
- 20% representatives from the European Citizens' Council;
- 10% representatives from the Regional Youth Council;
- 10% representatives of underserved or marginalised audiences
- 10% administrative representatives from the local authorities hosting the projects.

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

### 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.

When submitting the final application in September, the project leader must attach written confirmation from all partners (financial, technical, artistic, etc.) that they have been informed of the project. These elements will be essential for the jury to assess the level of involvement of each stakeholder, and for Bourges 2028 to ensure that no partner organisation is placed in a difficult position should the project be selected as a CRI winner.

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS

### For all applicants to the CRI

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.

**Projects selected by the jury will either receive financial support from Bourges 2028 (co-production), or will be awarded the label. The label will not entail any financial support from Bourges 2028.**

### For CRI Neighbourhoods in Action co-produced projects

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 amount awarded will be a maximum of €15,000 per project, up to a maximum of 70% of the projected project budget.**

**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.**

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 labelled project leaders](#)

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 be formalised through a partnership agreement.

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

If the jury issues an unfavourable decision, the refusal will be explained and stated 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.