

(PERMA)CULTURAL OPEN CALL 2026

Become Part of the České Budějovice 2028 - European Capital of Culture Programme

Announcer, Organizer, Processor

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version as of March 3, 2026

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1. Introduction

The city of České Budějovice will host the prestigious title of European Capital of Culture (hereinafter referred to as the ECOC) in 2028, together with Bourges (France) and Skopje (North Macedonia). The city organization České Budějovice – European Capital of Culture 2028, z. ú. (hereinafter also referred to as the “Organizer”) is responsible for the preparation, coordination, and implementation of events associated with this title.

This organization is now announcing an Open Call (hereinafter referred to as the “Call”), which aims to enable cultural actors to participate in the ECOC 2028 program. The call is implemented in accordance with the concept set out in the winning application, the Bid Book of České Budějovice 2028¹, based on which České Budějovice was selected by the European Commission's expert panel as the host city.

České Budějovice won the title of European Capital of Culture in 2023 in a national competition thanks to its long-term vision for the development of cultural offerings and infrastructure in the city and its original concept for the title year based on the concept of (Perma)culture. This approach does not view culture as a one-off event, but as a living and sustainable ecosystem. Although permaculture is most often associated with agriculture, its values can naturally be applied to culture, architecture, education, technology, and community life.

(Perma)culture naturally follows the character of the South Bohemian region as a historically agricultural region. At the same time it responds consciously to current European and global challenges, especially climate change and the need for sustainable development models. Moreover, the candidacy preparation took place in the period after the Covid-19 pandemic, when the cultural sector was in the process of recovery. (Perma)culture thus became a framework for strengthening its resilience, cooperation and long-term stability.

Within the framework of České Budějovice 2028 as ECoC, the concept of (Perma)culture is reflected in three basic principles: Care, Connect, and Create. These principles aim to fulfill the three key objectives of the project.

1. The openness of the project and the opportunity for everyone who wants to be part of the European Capital of Culture to get involved – whether through creative participation, community projects, educational activities, or volunteering – with an emphasis on accessibility and inclusion across social groups.
2. Sustainable implementation of the project with a view to the future after 2028, supporting innovation in regional culture and minimizing the environmental impact of the project.
3. Transforming the perception of České Budějovice – from a regional center to a self-confident European cultural metropolis that contributes to the development of

¹Available on the website: <https://www.budejovice2028.eu/bid-book>

tourism and strengthens the international presentation of the city and the entire South Bohemian region.

The (Perma)cultural Open Call takes place in 2025, 2026 and 2027 and consists of three calls.

In individual years, they are open to the following group of applicants:

in 2025: to organisations from the South Bohemian region

in 2026: to organisations from the Czech Republic and abroad

in 2027: to organisations from the South Bohemian region (smaller support in the tens of thousands CZK)

This document describes the conditions of the 2nd Open Call in 2026.

The Open Call is launched from **13. 3. 2026**.

The application deadline is on **10. 7. 2026**, including.

The number of projects supported and the total amount of support allocated under the Open Call 2026 are not fixed in advance; they are flexible with regard to the applications received and their quality.

The Organizer reserves the right to change the call before the application deadline.

The Organizer will always inform about any changes on its website and in this document.

2. Goals of the Open Call

The call gives cultural organizations the opportunity to become part of the official program of the České Budějovice 2028 - European Capital of Culture (ECOC).

The Open Call aims to:

- Support the creation of cultural projects with high-quality preparation and international dimension.
- Expand the ECOC program to include additional projects that will bring a unique cultural and artistic experience to residents and visitors of České Budějovice and South Bohemia region.
- Ensure the active involvement of national and international cultural actors in the ECOC 2028 program.
- To create new collaborations and partnerships between national and international cultural actors and the South Bohemian cultural scene.
- To contribute to the development of the cultural and creative sector in the South Bohemian region through new national and international cooperation.

- Support the development of tourism and expand the cultural offer for visitors to the city, region, and county.
- To increase awareness of České Budějovice and the region as an attractive cultural destination in the Czech Republic and abroad.

3. Focus of the Open Call and Responsibilities of the Applicant

This Call is intended for all those who want to expand the ECOC 2028 program in 2028 with new ideas and themes and implement **cultural or artistic projects** in České Budějovice, or elsewhere in the South Bohemian region.

We are looking for projects that provide meaningful experiences for audiences while also offering new opportunities for artistic and organisational development.

3.1. Theme of the (Perma)cultural Open Call 2026

The theme of the (Perma)cultural Open Call 2026 is **(Perma)culture** as a content framework, not as an aesthetic style or a single theme that needs to be illustrated. (Perma)culture is a way of thinking, planning and collaborating that respects the principles of caring for the Earth, caring for people, and caring for the future (responsible use of resources). This is reflected in the content of the project, its implementation, and its impact.

Projects applying to the Open Call should engage with the concept of (Perma)culture **in a conscious and concrete way**. The aim is not for the project to deal thematically with agriculture or ecology, but to reflect the principles of (Perma)culture in one or more of the following dimensions:

❖ **Process**

How is the project created and who is involved? We prioritize participatory approaches, cooperation with local actors, communities, schools or European experts from various fields. Transparency, fair conditions and shared responsibility are important.

❖ **Content**

What topics does the project open up and how? Projects can reflect a person's relationship to place, landscape, society or memory, respond to current challenges or develop local cultural specifics in a European context.

❖ **Impact**

What will remain after the project is completed? (Perma)culture emphasizes long-term benefits – skills development, strengthening community ties, new forms of collaboration, methodologies, infrastructure, or a change in approach to creation and cultural production.

(Perma)cultural Open Call 2026 seeks projects that contribute to an open, sustainable and collaborative cultural ecosystem and which perceive culture as a tool for caring for place, people and the future.

3.2. Artistic Genres

The ECOC programme currently consists of over 60 projects across a wide range of genres and formats. However, some genres are under-represented or not represented at all in the ECOC programme. **The call is open to all cultural and artistic fields and genres, but the following genres will be given preference in terms of points in the evaluation:**

❖ contemporary and conceptual fine art

➤ examples:

- site-specific installations and artistic interventions in public space or landscape
- conceptual exhibition project with a curatorial framework
- participatory art projects involving the public
- intermedia and interdisciplinary art projects

❖ audiovisual, multimedia and digital arts, immersive content, video game development, film

➤ examples:

- immersive audiovisual installation
- interactive digital projects in public space
- videomapping and large-format projections
- projects using VR/AR/XR technologies
- artistic or educational video games
- multimedia performance connecting image, sound and technology
- digital art working with data, AI or game principles
- film festival

❖ architecture

➤ examples:

- temporary architectural pavilions
- experimental structures in public space
- participatory architectural realizations
- intervention in public space
- tactical urbanism projects
- architectural and artistic installations
- research and mapping architectural projects with public output
- publications about contemporary South Bohemian architecture

❖ contemporary design and fashion

➤ examples:

- Designer fashion collections and their presentations
- experimental fashion performances or shows
- designer installations in public spaces
- circular and sustainable design projects
- interdisciplinary projects connecting design, craft and technology
- contemporary design shows
- participatory design projects with communities

❖ contemporary music

➤ examples:

- international festival cooperation
- site-specific music projects
- experimental and intermedia concerts
- audiovisual music performance
- projects at the intersection of music and sound art
- participatory music projects with the public
- sound art installation

❖ **photography**

➤ examples:

- author's photography exhibitions
- documentary photography projects with public outreach
- participatory photography projects
- multimedia projects combining photography with other media
- photographic interventions in public space
- long-term research photography projects

3.3. Partners and Other Conditions of the Open Call

Each project must involve at least one international partner. For applicants (national, international) who do not have a registered office or branch in the South Bohemian region, it is a condition to have a partner from the South Bohemian region.

Partners are mainly cultural, educational, research or other organizations that will actively participate in the development and implementation of the project. Partners do not include service providers (e.g. technical support) and individual artists.

We also recommend that projects seek support from European or other funds. These aspects will be part of the project evaluation (see chapter 11).

The applicant can participate in online thematic seminars (see chapter 14), of which a recording will be provided, or they can participate in an in-person workshop for applicants, where they will learn how to best complete the application form.

If there is sufficient interest from applicants, an online "matchmaking" will be held at the turn of May and June, which should serve to connect regional, national and international organizations looking for a partner for the Open Call.

The applicant commits to implement the main output of the project during 2028.

Location of **the main output of a large project**: České Budějovice

Location of **the main output of a small project**: České Budějovice and the South Bohemian region.

Projects where the Applicant is an organization that leads the ECOC program from the winning application or from the first call of the (Perma)cultural Open Call 2025 **will not be**

supported. One of the objectives of the call is to enable the involvement of other cultural actors in the ECOC program.

This Open Call is not a regular grant call. It is a process that provides comprehensive support for the development of the project and its implementation beyond the scope of mere financial support (see below). The successful applicant becomes a partner and part of the European Capital of Culture 2028 project and will work closely with the Organiser on the preparation of the project and its implementation in 2028.

Steps in case of project approval:

A Memorandum of Cooperation will be signed with successful applicants - an agreement on the preparation of a cultural project for 2028.

Furthermore, a contract will be signed for 2027, on the basis of which the Organizer will provide funds for the preparation of the project in 2027. This will include more specific refinement of the project, preparatory activities proposed by the Applicant and an obligation to participate in the Project Amplifier (**approximately 64 hours from February to April 2027**). The Academy aims to strengthen the know-how of local cultural actors in the preparation and implementation of projects.

The successful Applicant becomes part of the program and organizational ecosystem of the České Budějovice 2028 - European Capital of Culture committed to active cooperation with ČB28 and adherence to the jointly established process of preparation and implementation of the project.

This cooperation includes, in particular, adhering to the project timeline, providing documents on time, participating in coordination meetings, cooperating with the assigned ECOC coordinator, and respecting project milestones.

4. Eligible Applicants

Only legal entities can be applicants (including publicly funded organizations, associations, s.r.o., NGOs, universities and secondary schools, etc.)

Applicants may be organizations from the South Bohemian Region, the Czech Republic, the European Union, or anywhere else in the world.

This Open Call does not restrict eligible applicants in terms of location of their registered office or a branch. However, if the applicant is not from the South Bohemian Region or does not have a branch there, **the main partner of the project must have its registered office or a branch in the South Bohemian Region.**

Each applicant may submit only one project as the main applicant.

Individuals can participate as creators or members of the project implementation team, not as individual applicants.

Applications from organisations or individuals subject to EU sanctions or linked to sanctioned entities are not eligible.

5. Timeline for the 2026 Open Call

Phases	Date
Launch of the Open Call	13. 3. 2026
Online seminar: About ECOC 2028, the requirements for projects in the Open Call and filling out the application form (in Czech language)	26. 3. 2026
Online seminar: Q&A for international organisations (in English language)	17. 4. 2026
In-person Workshop: Advice on how to fill out the application efficiently and Q&A session (in Czech language)	28. 5. 2026
Application Deadline	10. 07. 2026 (23:59 CET)
Formal and professional evaluation	11. 07. – 09. 10. 2026
Announcement of results (end of Open Call)	before 09. 10. 2026
Subsequent schedule:	
Finalization of contracts	until 1/2027
Project Amplifier	2/2027 – 05/2027
Preparatory phase of projects	01/2027–12/2027
Implementation of main project outputs	01/2028–12/2028

6. Financial Framework and Level of Support

Allocation for the call in 2025: max. CZK 20,000,000

Allocation for the call in 2026: max. CZK 25,000,000

Allocation for the call in 2027: max. CZK 5,000,000

Total allocation for all calls until 2028: max. CZK 50,000,000

7. Funding Conditions for the 2026 Open Call

Project sizes and support levels:

1. Small-scale project:

- minimum budget: 750,000 CZK
- maximum amount of support: CZK 1,500,000
- **maximum support share on the total costs: 70%**

2. Large-scale project:

- minimum budget: 2,200,000 CZK
- maximum amount of support: CZK 4,000,000
- **maximum support share on the total costs: 50%**

The Applicant submits a budget for two years of preparation and implementation (2027, 2028) and the above amounts are for these years together.

A maximum of CZK 400,000 may be allocated for project preparation in the first year (2027) in the case of a small-scale project and up to CZK 800,000 in the case of a large-scale project.

Funds in the first year of project implementation (2027) are intended only for activities related to project planning. **They are not intended for the implementation of project outputs for the public.**

8. Eligible and Ineligible Costs

This call is intended exclusively for non-investment projects.

The costs must be incurred for activities in accordance with the content and objectives of the supported project. Furthermore, they must be actually incurred and supported by supporting documents.

The aforementioned costs must be incurred no earlier than the date of conclusion of the contract with the Organizer.

Eligible Costs:

direct costs:

- services
 - royalties (self-employed, work contracts, copyright contracts, etc.)
 - production and technical support (rentals, technical support, interpreting, translations)

- travel and accommodation
- marketing costs
- material costs
 - small tangible assets up to 80,000 CZK

indirect costs:

- **can constitute a maximum of 20% of the support amount**
 - space rental (operating lease)
 - purchase of office supplies
 - telephone and internet costs

Ineligible Costs:

- wages, salaries, other personal expenses (social and health contributions)
- material costs: assets over 80,000 CZK
- refreshments and catering
- bank fees, prizes and rewards, benefit or charity events.

Direct ineligible costs may be included as part of project co-financing (30% for small projects and 50% for large projects – see Chapter 5 of these conditions).

If the Applicant is from abroad, the organization České Budějovice – Evropské hlavní město kultury 2028, z. ú. is obliged to pay VAT at the rate of 21% for the services provided to the Applicant. VAT must be included in the total budget and the amount of support from the ECOC.

9. Submitting an Application

Project registration by the Applicant is carried out by submitting the application and all mandatory attachments via email to **opencall@budejovice2028.cz**. The email subject must be:

“(Perma)culture Open Call 2026 + [Applicant Name]”.

Simultaneously, the Applicant must **submit the completed registration form**.

The registration form and all required attachments are listed in Chapter 10.

The closing date is the decisive time of delivery to the Organizer email box. **The closing date is 10. 7. 2026 (23:59 CET)**. Applications received in the email box after this date are automatically rejected.

The Organizer will subsequently check the application and the required attachments for completeness. If formal deficiencies are identified, the Applicant will be invited to provide the missing information or documents. The deadline for submission is seven working days (inclusive) from the delivery of the request for completion. If this deadline is not met or the requested information is not provided, the project will be rejected.

10. Form and Mandatory Attachments

1. [Project Form](#) - all sheets filled out (*download link*)
2. [Letter of Intent \(intention to cooperate\)](#) - at least 1 partner from South Bohemia region
3. Founding documents / Articles of Association + list of beneficial owners.
4. Power of attorney from the statutory representative (if applicable)
5. [Registration Form](#) - submitted

11. Evaluation

1) Evaluation Method:

The evaluation is in two rounds. In the first round, the Committee will evaluate projects based on submitted applications. Projects that exceed the required threshold for support (70 points) will advance to the second round, in which applicants will answer additional questions from the Evaluation Committee. The second round will take place in the second half of September in České Budějovice. International applicants have the option of completing the second round online.

2) Evaluation Committee:

The Evaluation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) is a body formed by the Organizer for the purpose of a transparent, objective and fair process of evaluating applications.

The Committee consisting of institutional representatives and independent members will evaluate individual projects. Based on this evaluation, selected projects will proceed to the second round, during which additional questions may be addressed to the applicants. This will be followed by a meeting of the Committee for discussion and voting, after which decisions will be made regarding the extent to which each project meets the criteria and the allocation of support.

Committee

– independent members (4 voting members):

- grants/open calls expert (committee chair)
- representative of the ECOC 2028 artistic council
- representative of the Czech cultural scene
- ECOC expert

– institutional representatives (3 voting members):

- representative of the city's cultural commission / city's cultural department
- representative of the regional cultural commission / regional cultural department
- representative of the Organizer – ČB ECOC 2028

3) Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

Criterion	Points
artistic quality, innovation and consistency with the themes and goals of ČB28	0 – 50
- artistic quality and innovation	0 - 15
- elaboration of the topic of (Perma)culture	0 - 10
- size and impact of the project	0 - 10
- allignment with a preferred artistic genre	0 - 15
international and local cooperation	0 – 20
- quality of cooperation with a local partner for national and international applicants	
- quality of international cooperation for local and national applicants	
budget	0 – 20
- budget adequacy	
- realistic financing	
- international financing plan	
applicant's competence	0 – 10
- the applicant's experience in implementing international cultural projects	
Maximum	100

The minimum threshold for receiving financial support is 70 points.

The points score is not directly proportional to the applicant's proposed budget. However, the Commission is granted the power to propose changes to the scope of the project and the amount of financial support to be provided.

12. Publicity and Reporting

During implementation the Applicant is required to include the official graphic elements of **ČB28, Statutory City of České Budějovice, South Bohemian Region, Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and the EU** on all materials related to the project.

Reporting on the preparations and implementation of the project will take place once a year, based on a contract concluded with ČB28. In 2027 and 2028, the project will be reported to the Ministry of Culture at annual intervals based on the submitted application for funding.

13. Preliminary Contractual Terms and Conditions, Financing Method

The basic document for cooperation between the Organizer and the Applicant will be the Memorandum, which will describe the process of preparing and implementing the project, including basic administrative and contractual conditions.

Funding in 2027

In 2027, the Applicant will be provided with funding for project preparation through a Project Preparation Agreement concluded with the Organizer. This agreement will ensure coverage of costs associated with the development and advancement of the project proposed by the Applicant, including the Applicant's participation in the ČB2028 Academy, which serves as a support process for project development and preparation.

Funding in 2028

For 2028, project financing will be agreed between the Organizer and the Applicant after finalizing the project and budget for 2028 in mid-2027.

Funding will either be provided directly by the Organizer or secured from the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic based on a formal application for support.

The funds will be allocated in advance by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. The Organizer will provide the Applicant with all assistance in preparing and submitting the application, with the entire mechanism being agreed and secured between the Organizer and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

The application to the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic will be submitted in November of each year, and the funds should be transferred to the implementer's account during January/February of the following year.

Project Changes

Any substantial changes to the project (e.g. scope, venue, partners) are subject to the prior written consent of the Organizer.

14. Support

Organizer's Representative: Matěj Vlašánek, programme director
opencall@budejovice2028.cz

You can register for a series of online seminars on the website <https://www.budejovice2028.eu/en/open-call> For those who cannot join at the specified times, we will post a recording.

- **Online seminar: About ECOC 2028 and the requirements for Open Call projects**

26. 3. 13:00–16:00 / in Czech language

We will present the Open Call in the context of EHMK 2028 and explain its conditions in more detail. We will go through the process of preparing and implementing projects that successful applicants can expect, including the ČB28 Academy, and explain how to correctly fill in all the requirements and how to draw up a project budget in accordance with the requirements of the Open Call.

- **Online seminar: Q&A / in English language**

17. 4. 14:00 –16:00

A brief introduction to Open Call in English, followed by a Q&A for international applicants.

- **Workshop: How to best fill out an application / in Czech language**

28. 5. 10:00 - 15:00

We are not planning any in-person consultations for this call. Instead, interested parties will be able to attend a workshop in České Budějovice, where we will go through the application form in detail and recommend how to fill it out so that it is as understandable as possible for the Evaluation Committee. We will also answer any questions that applicants may have about filling out the application form.

- **Matchmaking: Connecting organizations**

end of May/June 2026

Projects with high-quality regional, national and international partnerships will have a greater chance of succeeding in the Open Call. [If you are looking for international or local partners, fill out this table by April 30th.](#) Based on the number and type of organizations that fill out the table, we will organize a so-called matchmaking meeting to potentially connect partners. At the same time, it is possible to contact the organizations directly based on the data in the table.

15. List of Terms and Abbreviations

Announcer - the announcer of the Open Call; České Budějovice – European Capital of Culture 2028, registered office:

Organizer - organizer of the Open Call; České Budějovice – Evropské hlavní město kultury 2028, z. ú.

Processor - processor of the conditions; České Budějovice – Evropské hlavní město kultury 2028, z. ú.

Conditions - the document setting out the rules of the Open Call

Applicant - authorized applicant; i.e. a legal entity meeting the conditions for participation in the Open Call

Cultural Actor - organizer, creator, producer of cultural activities or environments, without restrictions to a specific cultural focus and artistic genre.

Bid Book - The Bid Book České Budějovice 2028 is a document created as part of the city's candidacy for the title of European Capital of Culture. It summarizes the binding program, principles, content and procedures according to which České Budějovice will implement its activities.

Committee - Evaluation Committee, a body formed by the organizer for the purpose of a transparent, objective and fair process of evaluating applications.

ČB28 = České Budějovice – České Budějovice – Evropské hlavní město kultury 2028, z. ú.

MK ČR = Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic

JČK = South Bohemian Region

ECOC = European Capital of Culture

EU = European Union