

ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE 2028 EVROPSKÉ HLAVNÍ MĚSTO KULTURY

TERMS AND CONDITIONS for (PERMA)CULTURAL OPEN CALL

Open call – become part of the European Capital of
Culture program for 2028

1st call 2025

Announcer, organizer, processor

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Introduction

In 2028, the city of České Budějovice will host the prestigious title of European Capital of Culture (hereinafter referred to as ECoC) together with Bourges in France and Skopje in Macedonia. The municipal 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 related to this title.

This organization is now announcing an open call (hereinafter referred to as the "Call") with the aim of enabling cultural actors from the South Bohemian Region to participate in the ECoC 2028 program. The Call is being implemented in accordance with the concept set out in the winning application, the Bid Book of České Budějovice 2028¹ on the basis of which České Budějovice was selected as the host city by a panel of experts from the European Commission.

A total of three calls will be launched in 2025, 2026, and 2027.

In each year, they will be open to the following groups of partners:

in 2025: actors from the South Bohemian Region

in 2026: actors from the Czech Republic and abroad

in 2027: actors from the South Bohemian Region

This document describes the conditions for the first call in 2025.

The call is announced on June 17, 2025. The application period ends on October 14, 2025, inclusive.

The number of projects supported and the total amount of support allocated under the first call in 2025 are not fixed in advance but are flexible depending on the applications received and their quality.

The organizer reserves the right to change the call before the deadline for submitting applications. The organizer will always inform applicants of any changes on its website and in this document.

1 Objectives of the Call

The call gives cultural organizations and actors from the South Bohemian Region the opportunity to become part of the official program of the European Capital of Culture 2028 (EHMK28).

The Call aims to:

- Support the creation of cultural projects with long-term planning, high-quality preparation, and international reach.
- To expand the 2028 program with additional projects that will bring a unique cultural and artistic experience to residents and visitors to the region.

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

- Ensure the active involvement of local actors in the EHMK program and strengthen their role in the preparation and implementation of 2028.
- Contribute to the development of the cultural and creative sector in the South Bohemian Region and strengthen its capacity to cooperate with foreign partners.
- Contribute to strengthening the know-how of local cultural actors when applying for European grants.
- Support the development of tourism and expand the cultural offer for visitors to the city, region, and province.
- Raise awareness of České Budějovice and the region as an attractive cultural destination in the Czech Republic and abroad.
- Support the local service sector through a multiplier effect. ²

2 Focus of the Call and Applicant's Obligations

This call is open to anyone who wants to expand the EHMK 2028 program with new ideas and themes in 2028 and implement a cultural or artistic project in České Budějovice or elsewhere in the South Bohemian Region. We are looking for projects that will provide a meaningful experience for the audience and, at the same time, offer new experiences for the organizers. The call is open to all cultural and artistic fields and genres.

Projects may fall within the following thematic areas:

Transformations of local and European identity
 Innovative presentation or use of cultural heritage
 The history of České Budějovice or southern Bohemia in the European context / European history in a local context
 Europe in danger?!
 Human rights, solidarity, and diversity
 Democracy and societal resilience
 Biodiversity and sustainability
 AI, digital art, and new technologies
 Innovation in music
 Connecting art and science.

The first call is intended for applicants based in České Budějovice / South Bohemia Region. The project must involve cooperation with a foreign partner³.

² Direct investments in culture generates indirect, broader economic and social impacts in the region. These impacts include not only direct expenditure on tickets, but also indirect expenditure on accommodation, transport, restaurants, and other services.

³ Organizer, creator, producer, artist, expert, cultural actor from abroad, etc.

At the same time, we recommend that projects seek support from European or other funds. These aspects will be part of the project evaluation (see Chapter 9).

Applicants may consult their plans individually until October 10, 2025, or participate in online thematic seminars (see Chapter 14), which will be recorded.

The applicant undertakes to implement their project during 2028, but it is possible for pilot years to take place in previous years.

Projects where the applicant is an organization that runs an EHMK program from a winning application will not be supported. One of the goals of the Call is to enable the involvement of other South Bohemian cultural actors.

This Call is not a regular grant call. It is a process that provides comprehensive support for project development and implementation beyond mere financial support (see below). Successful applicants will become partners and part of the European Capital of Culture 2028 project and will work closely with the Organizer on the preparation and production of the 2028 program.

Steps in case of project approval:

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

Furthermore, a contract will be concluded for 2026, under which the Organizer will provide funding for the preparation of the project in 2026. This will include more specific finalization of the project, preparatory activities proposed by the Applicant, and participation in the ČB28 Academy (approximately 64 hours from March to May 2026). The Academy aims to strengthen the know-how of local cultural actors in the preparation and implementation of projects. The preparation of the project, including participation in the Academy, will be remunerated in the outputs of the 2026 contract with a lump sum in excess of the requested support.

In 2027 and 2028, the applicant will submit formal applications to the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic for the call reserved for EHMK projects, with the Organizer providing the necessary support in this process. These applications will not be subject to further evaluation by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. Based on these applications, the applicant will receive financial support for the implementation of the project for both years.

3 Eligible applicants

Applicants may be legal entities (including contributory organizations, associations, limited liability companies, public benefit organizations, universities, secondary schools, etc.) with **their registered office in the South Bohemian Region** as of the date of the call for proposals, i.e., June 17, 2025.

Applicants may submit multiple projects as lead applicants. The Commission may select only one of them. Each entity may be **the lead implementer of only one supported project**.

Self-employed persons may participate as partners or team members, but not as independent applicants.

4 Schedule for the first call in 2025

Phase	Deadline
Call announcement & onboarding	June 17
Online seminar: About EHMK 2028 and requirements for projects submitted to the open call	August 13, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Online seminar: European partnership and funding opportunities	August 27, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Online seminar: How to fill out the application form and budget	September 11, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Individual consultations available	September 22 to October 10
Deadline for submitting applications	14 October 2025 (23:59 CET)
Formal and technical evaluation	October 15–November 14, 2025
Committee meeting	during the week of November 10–14, 2025
Announcement of results= end of open call	19 November 2025
Subsequent schedule:	
Conclusion of contracts	by 1/2026
ČB28 Academy	3/2026
Project preparation phase	01/2026–12/2027
Implementation of main project outputs	01/2028–12/2028

5 Financial framework and level of support

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

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

Allocation per call in 2027 approx. CZK 5,000,000

Total allocation for all calls until 2028: up to CZK 50,000,000

*If the allocation for a given year is not used up, it can be transferred to the following year.

Funding conditions for the 2025 call

Project size and level of support:

1. Small projects:

- a. minimum budget: CZK 750,000
- b. maximum budget: CZK 2,200,000
- c. maximum amount of support: CZK 1,540,000
- d. maximum share of support in costs: 70%**

2. Large projects:

- a. minimum budget: CZK 2,200,001
- b. maximum budget: no limit
- c. maximum amount of support: CZK 4,000,000
- d. maximum share of support in costs: 50%**

The budget is submitted by the applicant for all three years of preparation and implementation (2026, 2027, 2028), and the above amounts are for these years combined.

A maximum of CZK 200,000 may be allocated for project preparation in the first year (2026) for small projects and up to CZK 500,000 for large projects.

There is no limit for the preparation of the project in the second year of implementation (2027), but the key factor is the implementation of the main output in the third year, i.e. 2028.

6 Eligible and ineligible costs

This call is intended exclusively for non-investment projects.

The costs must be incurred for activities in line with the content and objectives of the supported project. They must also be actual costs and supported by documentary evidence. The costs must be incurred no earlier than the date of conclusion of the agreement with the Organizer.

Eligible costs:

direct costs:

- services
 - fees (self-employed persons, contracts for work, copyright agreements, etc.)
 - production and technical support (rentals, technical support, interpreting, translations)
 - travel and accommodation ○ marketing costs
- material costs
 - small assets up to CZK 80,000

indirect costs:

- **may constitute a maximum of 20% of the amount of support**
 - rental of premises (operating rent)

- purchase of office supplies ○ telephone and internet costs

Ineligible costs:

- wages, salaries, other personnel costs (social security and health insurance contributions)
- material costs: property over CZK 80,000
- refreshments and catering
- bank charges, prizes and rewards, charity or fundraising events.

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

7 Submission of applications

Project registration The applicant submits the application and the required attachments via **the ČB28 data box** (ID *cb8y9ds*) with the subject line “Opencall 2025”. The form and mandatory attachments are listed in Chapter 8.

The deadline is the time of delivery to the Organizer in the data box. The deadline is October 14, 2025 (11:59 p.m. CET). Applications received in the data box after this deadline will be automatically rejected.

The organizer will then check the application and the required attachments for any formal deficiencies and, if found, will ask the applicant to supplement the missing information. The deadline for submission is seven days from the date of delivery of the request for supplementation. Failure to meet the deadline or to submit the required information will result in the project being rejected.

8 Form and mandatory attachments

1. [Project form](#) – all pages completed
2. [Letter of Intent](#) (intention to cooperate) from at least one foreign partner.
3. Certificate of incorporation / articles of association + extract of beneficial owners.
4. [Power of attorney](#) of the statutory representative (if relevant).



9 Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) is a body set up by the Organizer for the purpose of ensuring a transparent, objective, and fair evaluation process. The evaluation process will be preceded by a meeting of the advisory body of the Committee, composed of members of platforms operating in the South Bohemian Region who represent the public. They will prepare a document for the Committee's deliberations, which will be of a recommendatory nature. The exact mechanism of the advisory body's deliberations will be specified based on the number of projects submitted.

A commission consisting of dependent and independent members will evaluate individual projects and meet to discuss and vote on them, based on which it will decide on the extent to which each project meets the criteria and allocate support.

Commission – independent members (4 voters):

- grant/open call expert (committee chair)
- representative of the EHMK 2028 artistic council
- representative of the EHMK 2028 panel of guarantors
- representative of the EHMK 2015 organizer (Pilsen 2015)

Commission – dependent section (3 voters):

- representative of the city's cultural committee / city politician responsible for culture
- representative of the regional cultural commission / regional politician responsible for culture
- representative of the organizer – ČB EHMK 2028

10 Evaluation and selection

Criterion	Points
Artistic quality and innovation	0 - 25
Compliance with ČB28 objectives & crosscutting themes	0 - 30
- accessibility and diversity	0 - 10
- sustainability	0 - 10
- attractiveness	0 - 10
international cooperation	0 – 20
adequacy of budget and realism of financing	0 - 15
competence of the applicant	0 - 10
Maximum	100

The minimum threshold for receiving financial support is **60 points**.

The score is not directly proportional to the applicant's proposed budget. However, the Commission is empowered to adjust the scope of the project and the amount of financial support to be granted.

Compliance with the objectives of CB28 will be assessed according to the following parameters:

Accessibility and diversity:

- a) the possibility for the public, schools, communities, etc. to actively participate in the creation or implementation of the project
- b) ensuring the accessibility of the project (minimising potential barriers to participation and inclusiveness for all social groups)

Sustainability:

- a) contribution to the development of innovation in regional culture
- b) ensuring the environmental sustainability of the project (minimizing environmental impact).

Attractiveness:

- a) developing tourism in the South Bohemian Region
- b) promoting the international profile of České Budějovice and the South Bohemian Region.

11 Publicity and reporting

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

Reporting on the preparation 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 annually to the Ministry of Culture based on a submitted application for funding.

12 Preliminary contractual conditions, method of financing

The basic document for cooperation between the Organizer and the Applicant will be a Memorandum describing the procedure for the preparation and implementation of the project, including the basic administrative and contractual conditions.

Financing in 2026

In 2026, the Applicant will be provided with funding for project preparation through a Project Preparation Agreement concluded with the Organizer. This agreement will cover the 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 2027 and 2028

In the following two years (2027 and 2028), funding for the project will be provided directly by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic on the basis of 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 necessary assistance in preparing and submitting the application, with the entire mechanism agreed and secured between the Organizer and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

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

Changes to the project

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

13 Consultation and support

Organizer's representative: Ivan Matejić, ivan.matejic@budejovice2028.cz, tel. 724 202 455

You can register for a series of online seminars at www.budejovice2028.cz/open-call. For those who are unable to join at the specified times, we will publish a recording.

- **Online seminar: About EHMK 2028 and requirements for projects submitted to the open call**

August 13, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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.

- **Online seminar: European partnerships and funding opportunities**

August 27, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

We will show examples of cooperation with international partners, which is a mandatory condition for projects. We will present European funds from which financial support for project co-financing can be requested.

- **Online seminar: How to fill out the application and budget**

September 11, 10:00 a.m.

We will go through the application form and explain how to fill in all the necessary information correctly and how to draw up a project budget in accordance with the requirements of the Call.

Consultation hours from September 22 to October 10.

These are individual consultation hours for explaining discrepancies and answering questions. The organizer reserves the right to publish questions asked by applicants. An online form published on the organizer's website will be used to book consultation hours.

List of terms and abbreviations

Organizer - the organizer of the Call; České Budějovice – European Capital of Culture 2028, z. ú.

Organizer – organizer of the Call; České Budějovice – European Capital of Culture 2028, z. ú.

Processor - processor of the Terms and Conditions; České Budějovice – European Capital of Culture 2028, z. ú.

Terms and Conditions – Document setting out the rules of the Call

Applicant - Eligible applicant; i.e. a legal entity that meets the conditions for participation in the Call

Cultural actor - organizer, creator, producer of a cultural environment of unspecified, arbitrary cultural focus and artistic genre

Bid Book - The Bid Book České Budějovice 2028 is a document created as part of the city's bid for the title of European Capital of Culture. It summarizes the binding program, principles, content, and procedures according to which České Budějovice would organize this cultural event

Commission - Evaluation Commission, a body set up by the organizer to ensure a transparent, objective, and fair process of evaluating applications

ČB28 = České Budějovice – European Capital of Culture 2028, z. ú

EHMK= European Capital of Culture

EU= European Union