Guide for Grant Recipients —

From Approval to Settlement

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1. Payment of Grant Funds

Grant funds can only be paid out after we have signed a grant agreement with you. The agreement must be **legally signed** by a person authorized to represent the applicant organization, such as board members, managing directors or authorized representatives.

The funding is not paid out automatically. You must request the payment yourself through the application portal (usually in installments). This request is called a disbursement request ("Mittelabruf").

Exception for Cultural Bridge funding recipients: You will receive the disbursement of funds form from us by email and should submit it by email.

For all other funding programmes — How to request a payment:

1. Log in to the application portal using the email address used for your application
2. Open "Bewilligte Anträge" (Approved Applications)
3. Click „Mittelauszahlung" (Disbursement of Funds)
4. Select a payment date (1st or 15th of the month)
   Important: Submit your disbursement of funds well in advance. We require a minimum lead time of 21 days
5. Enter the amount requested
6. Enter your bank account details
7. Click „Mittelabruf einreichen" (Submit disbursement request)
8. Confirm the payment conditions in the pop-up window

Six-Week Spending Rule: Please check whether your Funding Agreement contains Section 4 "Auszahlung der Mittel" (Disbursement of Funds). If Section 4 is included, the funding must be spent within six weeks of receipt in your bank account. If Section 4 is not included, you may spend the funding amount at any time during the approved project period. **Please note:** Other public funding received for the project is included in this calculation. If you already hold other public funding for the project in your account, you may need to submit your disbursement request for our funding at a later date or provide evidence of corresponding project expenditures.

How to avoid interest charges under the 6-week rule:

- Pre-finance invoices with your own funds and submit a disbursement request later
- Only request funds needed for the next six weeks
- Return unused funds before the end of 6-week period and request them again later. Please return unused funds to the following account (including your project number): Sparkasse KölnBonn, IBAN: DE40 3705 0198 0007 5051 67

Only expenditures within the project period are eligible: Please note that only expenditures incurred within the project period specified in the Funding Agreement are eligible for funding. Costs incurred after the end of the project period cannot be considered.

2. Changes During the Project

Changes to the Budget and Financing Plan:
Budget deviations of less than 20% compared to the approved budget do not need to be explained or approved. If a deviation exceeds 20%, the Fonds Soziokultur must provide written approval before the end of the funding period. Please explain the reasons for the change in one or two sentences. After the end of the funding period, changes are usually no longer possible and may result in the recovery of grant funds.

Changes to Project Activities:
The approved project activities described in the application form the basis of the grant funding. Significant changes to the project concept must be discussed with and approved by the Fonds Soziokultur in advance (e.g. if a target group can no longer be reached, the number of events or activities is reduced, the project topic or focus changes, a cooperation partner withdraws, or similar major changes occur).

Extension of the Project Period:
An extension of the project period is generally possible. However, the request must be submitted before the project end date.

3. Travel Expenses

Travel expenses may only be reimbursed in accordance with the German Federal Travel Expenses Act (Bundesreisekostengesetz).

Eligible travel expenses include:

- travel costs for participants
- travel costs for freelancers and contractors
- travel costs for permanent staff travelling on official business
- accommodation costs
- daily allowances

3.1 Travel Costs

The following reimbursements are eligible:

Train travel
Second-class tickets and seat reservations. Submit the tickets with your proof of expenditure.

Air travel
Only eligible if they are necessary or less expensive than alternative means of transport. Submit tickets and invoices with your proof of expenditure.

Public transport passes (e.g. Germany Ticket or monthly passes)
These may be reimbursed in full or in part if their use for the project can be demonstrated and they are more cost-effective than purchasing individual tickets.

Privat-PKW
0,20 €/km, max. 150 € per trip (including the outbound and return journey).

The proof of expenditure must include: name, date, purpose of the journey, route, and number of kilometres travelled. You may either provide this information in a list or use a travel expense form.
Important: The reimbursement rate cannot be increased for passengers or luggage. Fuel receipts are not eligible. Parking fees may be reimbursed up to €10 per day.

Rental car
Rental and fuel costs are eligible. The necessity of the rental car must be explained (e.g. no public transport available, transport of large amounts of materials, travel by several people, or no access to a private vehicle). Please submit the invoice and justification with your proof of expenditure.

Company vehicle
A logbook must be maintained. Reimbursement is calculated at the same rate as for a private car. Please submit a copy of the logbook with your proof of expenditure.

Taxi
Taxi costs are only eligible if there is a valid reason (e.g. heavy luggage of more than 25 kg, health-related reasons, or arrival late at night). Please submit the receipt and a brief justification with your proof of expenditure.

3.2 Accommodation

Private accommodation
For free private accommodation, a flat-rate reimbursement of €20 per night in Germany (max. 14 nights) or €30 per night abroad may be claimed.

The proof of expenditure must include: name, purpose of the stay, and number of nights.

Hotel, guesthouse, or holiday apartment
Accommodation costs of up to €70 per night (excluding breakfast) do not require comparison quotes.

For accommodation costs exceeding €70 per night, three written comparison quotes (e.g. screenshots) must be obtained. Evidence that no lower-priced option was available must be submitted with the proof of expenditure.

For international travel, different accommodation allowance limits apply depending on the country (ARVVwV).

3.3 Daily Allowance

The daily allowance is a flat-rate payment for meals during travel. It is paid per day, regardless of the actual costs incurred. A daily allowance can only be claimed if the trip includes an overnight stay.

Daily allowance (Germany):

- Arrival and departure day: €14
- Full day (24 hours away): €28
- Absence of less than 8 hours: no daily allowance

Example: For a four-day trip, you can claim €14 for the arrival day, €14 for the departure day, and €28 for each of the two full days in between. The total daily allowance is €84.

Important: If a meal is provided free of charge (e.g. breakfast at the hotel), the daily allowance must be reduced as follows:

- Breakfast: — €5.60
- Lunch or dinner: — €11.20

This may result in no daily allowance being payable.

Daily allowance (international travel):
The daily allowance for international travel is based on the allowance rates listed in the: ARVVwV

- Arrival and departure day: 80% of the applicable allowance rate
- Full day: 100% of the applicable allowance rate

Reductions for meals provided free of charge:

- Breakfast: —20% of the applicable allowance rate
- Lunch or dinner: —40% of the applicable allowance rate

Proof of Expenditure: Travel costs and/or daily allowances must be supported by evidence of the trip. You may use our travel expense form for this purpose. Depending on the individual case, additional supporting documents may be required. Each business trip (consisting of an outbound and return journey) must be accounted for separately. Combined claims for multiple trips are not permitted.

4. Catering / Hospitality Costs

Food and drinks for participants and volunteers can be funded (for example, at events, workshops, or similar activities). All costs must follow the principles of economy and cost efficiency.

Food and drinks for the project team (people who receive a salary or fee from the project, such as staff, trainers, freelancers, or speakers) are generally not eligible for funding. If an overnight stay is required, a daily allowance may be reimbursed according to the German Federal Travel Expenses Act (see Chapter 3.3).

Exception: Team members may also receive food and drinks **if the number of external participants is greater than the number of team members.**

When catering is eligible:

- Drinks (water, coffee, and tea) are eligible at events, workshops, rehearsals, and similar activities
- Meals or catering are eligible for workshops, rehearsals, and similar activities only if they last more than 3 hours

Not eligible:

- Food and drinks at internal team meetings
- Food and drinks for visitor groups (for example, people who only visit an exhibition)

If you are unsure whether catering costs are eligible for funding, please check with the office in advance. Some exceptions apply, for example for exhibition openings or premieres.

Proof of use: Please keep a list with the location, date, reason for the catering (e.g. workshop), duration of the event or meeting, and the names of the participants.

5. Expenses Not Eligible for Funding

Grant funding must be used economically and efficiently.
The following costs are not eligible for funding:

- Energy drinks, medicines, cigarettes, and other recreational substances
- Alcohol is only eligible for premieres or exhibition openings (vernissages); otherwise, costs must be deducted or proof of the event provided
- Bottle deposits and reusable packaging charges
- Meals and drinks in restaurants are only eligible for external participants; team members must pay for themselves (exception: if there are more external participants than team members)
- Tips are only eligible if mandatory (e.g. abroad)

- Voluntary insurance and travel insurance (e.g. trip cancellation, accident, or travel health insurance), except project-related public liability or equipment insurance
- Discounts and cash discounts must be used. Late payment fees, default interest, contractual penalties, and fines are not eligible
- If you are entitled to reclaim VAT, only the net amount is eligible for funding
- Staff costs exceeding the salary levels of the Federal Public Service Pay Scale (TVöD Bund)
- Salary costs for permanent staff that are already funded from another source
- Fees paid to association members for voluntary activities (e.g. board duties); additional services agreed separately by contract may be eligible for funding

6. Procurement of Services (Federal Requirements)

Freelance Services
The procurement of freelance services must follow the applicable procurement rules and the principles of cost efficiency and economical use of funds.

For services costing €1,000.01 net or more, at least **three comparable offers from different providers** must be obtained, documented, and kept on file. The Fonds Soziokultur may request these documents.

Freelance services are services provided by self-employed individuals or single persons who offer comparable services on the market. Companies with employees subject to social security contributions are not considered freelance service providers. For these cases, the rules for „direct contracts“ apply.

Examples include:

- graphic design, photography, video production, technical services, or similar services
- organisational development consulting

No comparison offers are required for:

- artistic or educational services
- project management
- persons specifically named in the grant application for this service

Freelance contracts should be awarded to different individuals. After a maximum of three consecutive contracts, the service provider should be changed.

Direct Contracts with Companies
A direct contract applies when services are commissioned directly from a provider without a procurement procedure (e.g. agencies, print shops, construction or office supply stores, IT providers, telephone systems, etc.).

For direct contracts until 31 December 2026, a higher threshold applies:
- up to €15,000 net: no procurement procedure required
- however, the principles of cost efficiency and economical use of funds must be followed (e.g. by comparing prices)

7. Public Relations

7.1 Funding Acknowledgement & Logos

In your public relations activities (online and print), you must acknowledge the funding provided by the Fonds Soziokultur and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM). Cultural Bridge grant recipients must use the specific Cultural Bridge logo.

➔ Download logo package Fonds Soziokultur and BKM
➔ Or use the wording: „Funded by the Fonds Soziokultur with funds from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media." (Gefördert durch den Fonds Soziokultur aus Mitteln des Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien.)

➔ Download Logo package Cultural Bridge

Use of logos:
- Do not distort, crop, or change the colours of the logos
- The white background of the BKM logo must remain unchanged
- The Fonds Soziokultur logo should be smaller than your own logo (recommended: max. 50%)

7.2 Project Presentation

All funded projects within General Project Funding and U25 — Young Cultural Initiatives are published with a short description. In the application portal ("Approved Applications"), you can update the project title, short description, and website, and upload photos. Selected projects will be presented as highlights. You are welcome to send additional photos or videos to: presse@fonds-soziokultur.de

Projects funded through Cultural Bridge will be published on the Cultural Bridge website.

7.3 Visibility & Networking

Social Media
Connect with us and tag us in your posts — this allows us to share your content and increase the visibility of your project. Please also mention the funding by the Fonds Soziokultur in your posts.

Events
Invite us to public presentations or final events: presse@fonds-soziokultur.de
(We will try to attend)

Political Visibility
Invite Members of the German Bundestag from your constituency to your events. This increases the visibility of your work and shows the impact of the funding.

We also inform Members of the German Bundestag from your constituency about your project. Please let us know if a Member of the Bundestag accepts your invitation — we will do the same and try to attend the event.

The exchange between the cultural sector and politics helps to make sociocultural work and its funding visible and sustainable in the long term.

➔ You can search for Members of the German Bundestag from your constituency here: Members of the German Bundestag

8. Interim Report (for Multi-Year Funding)

An interim report is only required if a project runs beyond one calendar year and continues beyond the end of February of the following year. The interim report covers expenses and activities up to 31 December. The submission deadline is 31 March.
If the project ends by the end of February, the final proof of use is sufficient (see Section 9).

The interim report consists of two parts:

Financial Overview (Planned vs. Actual):
Overview of all project expenses up to 31 December. Planned expenses are compared with actual expenses. The basis is the most recently approved cost and financing plan. The planned vs. actual overview must be legally signed (digital signature is also possible).

If there is a second full year of funding, the second interim report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December of the second year.

➔ Template for the financial overview for the interim report

Short Narrative Report (one page)
Description of the project goals achieved so far, activities carried out, and the related necessary expenses.

No supporting documents are required (e.g. invoices or proof of payment)

9. Proof of Use

After the end of your project, you must submit a proof of use. It shows how you used the grant funds and how the project was carried out. The proof of use must be submitted within two months after the end of the funding period (see Grant Agreement, including any approved extensions).

All documents can be submitted via the application portal, by email, or by post. The final report (Abschlussbericht) is completed as an online form directly in the application portal. Photos and other documents can also be uploaded there.

Cultural Bridge grant recipients must submit the proof of use only by email or post.

The proof of use includes:

- Financial report (Zahlenmäßiger Nachweis)
- Legally binding declaration (Rechtsverbindliche Erklärung)
- Supporting documents
- Proof of payment
- Final report (except Cultural Bridge, see Section 9.5)
- Additional documentation, if available (e.g. press coverage, photos, videos, posters, flyers)

9.1 Financial Report

➔ Download Excel template for the financial report / proof of use

The financial report includes:

- **Planned vs. actual overview:** Comparison of the costs approved by the Fonds Soziokultur with the actual project expenses. Please use the same terms as in the cost and financing plan
- **List of all project expenses** (not only expenses funded by the Fonds Soziokultur)

- **List of income** (if there are several funding providers, please state when each payment was received)

Accepted formats:

- The provided Excel template
- A report exported from your own accounting system (including date, recipient, purpose of payment, and amount)
- A copy of a report submitted to another public funding body

The financial report must be submitted as an **Excel file.** PDF files or scans are not accepted.

9.2 Legally Binding Declaration

The Excel file “Proof of Use” contains a cover sheet with the legally binding declaration. This declaration must be completed, legally signed, and submitted. A digital signature is accepted. The signed page can be submitted as a scan or JPG file.

➔ Download Legally binding declaration
➔ Download Legally binding declaration (Funding type: predefined cost items)

9.3 Supporting Documents

Please submit **copies** of your expense documents by email or post. Please name the files according to the document numbers in your expense list. Documents sent by post will be returned after review.

Examples of supporting documents:

- Invoices
- Receipts
- Cash payments (e.g. purchases via eBay Classifieds, flea markets, etc.) are only accepted with a receipt. The receipt must include: recipient of payment, purpose of payment, amount, and signature of the recipient.
- For **freelancers**: submit fee agreements (if available), invoices, or cash receipts.
- For volunteer allowances: volunteer agreements (if available) or cash receipts.
- **Permanent employees:** submit the latest payslip. Personal data must be blacked out, except name, period, and gross salary. In addition, complete the “Permanent Staff Overview” section in the Excel file “Proof of Use”.
- **Comparison offers** must be submitted for services subject to procurement rules (see Section 6).
- For **travel and catering costs**, please follow the instructions in the relevant sections (see Sections 3 and 4).

Number of documents required:
The documents you must submit depend on the type of funding (see Grant Agreement, Section 2):

- Fixed amount funding: **all documents for public funding** received
- Co-financing / funding gap financing: **all** expense documents
- Funding by budget item: documents for the **cost items specified in the Grant Agreement**

Important: No additional review is required if another public authority has already reviewed a complete proof of expenditure and you provide us with a copy of the review note.

9.4 Proof of Payment

In addition to the supporting documents, we also need proof that the expenses have actually been paid.

Accepted **proof of payment** includes:

- Copies of bank statements showing the payment
- Copies of cash register receipts
- Cash receipts

Travel tickets and invoices showing proof of payment (e.g. “paid with PayPal” or “Amazon Pay”), as well as cash register receipts and cash receipts, are accepted as both supporting documents and proof of payment. Additional bank statements are not required.

9.5 Final Report

Log in to the Fonds Soziokultur application portal. Under “Approved Applications” (bewilligte Anträge), select your project and click “Final Report” (Abschlussbericht). Complete the questionnaire and submit it.

Exception for Cultural Bridge: Towards the end of your project, the Cultural Bridge team will send you a questionnaire. You must complete it together with your UK partner. As partner organisations, you submit one joint questionnaire/evaluation. No additional narrative report or similar document is required.

10. ANBest-P

The General Ancillary Provisions for Project Funding (ANBest-P) form the basis of our funding.

Please read the regulations and information here: ANBest-P.