



OULU
2026

Guide for Applicants

Open Call for Applications 3 October – 9 December 2022

Contents

General information.....	3
Goals	3
Cultural Programme	4
Themes.....	4
What Do We Mean by Culture?.....	4
What Kind of Projects Are We Looking for?.....	4
Who Can Apply?	5
Responsible Party.....	6
Application Process?	6
Open Call Process.....	6
The Evaluation Process	7
Selection Criteria	7
Evaluation Criteria	8
Funding	8
The Terms and Conditions of Co-Funding.....	9
Grants.....	9
Schedule of Payments and Reporting.....	10
Communication.....	10
Further Information.....	10

Oulu is the European Capital of Culture 2026 – Join us to bring about a cultural climate change!

General Information

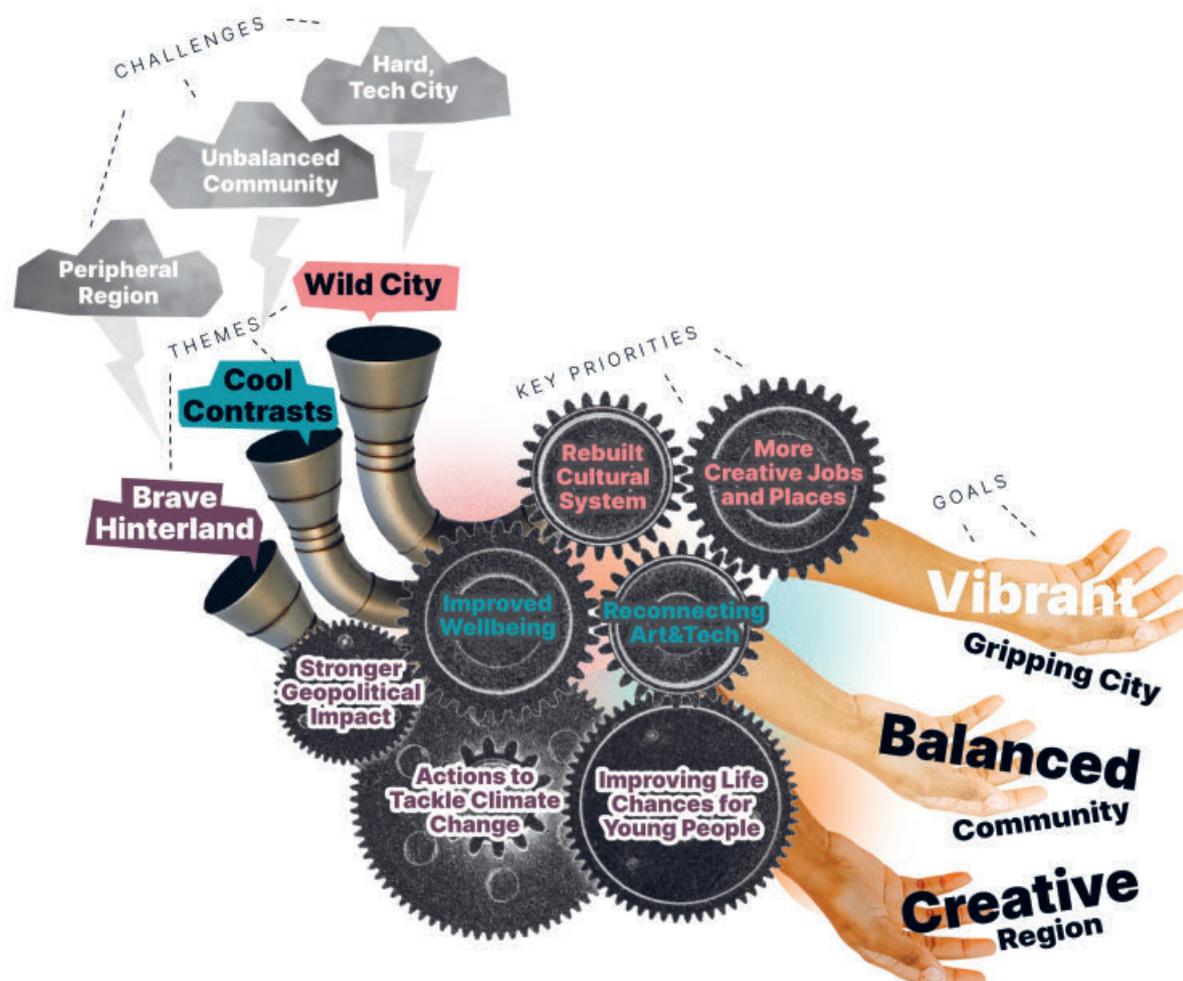
The City of Oulu applied for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2026 in accordance with the decision of the Oulu city council in 2017, marking the 100th anniversary of Finland’s independence. The European Capital of Culture is one of the widely known European Union initiatives. It highlights the significance of cities as hubs of cultural life. The selection of Oulu as the European Capital of Culture 2026 was confirmed in June 2021.

The title presents the selected city with a unique opportunity for cultural, social as well as economic development. The title brings with it a variety of positive action, including international guests for the travel industry and business sector, projects aimed at improving the cultural infrastructure, national and international seminars, transnational collaboration and cultural events.

The cultural capital programme in Oulu is coordinated and managed by the Oulu Culture Foundation. The Culture Foundation provides co-funding for projects. The programme itself is realised by local, national and international actors.

Goals

The central goal of Oulu2026 is to create and offer culture, wellbeing and vitality to our Northern region.



Cultural Programme

The focus of the Oulu2026 activities is on the cultural programme. The majority of projects under the cultural programme are carried out under an external executive production leadership and they are selected and co-funded through the Open Calls.

The cultural programme introduced in the Oulu2026 bid book is only a small sample of the final programme. Under the existing themes, new projects will be added, and new projects may also be formed into new programme lines. The autumn 2022 Open Call is aimed at projects related to the themes Wild City, Cool Contrasts and Brave Hinterland.

Themes

Brave Hinterland brings to the fore narratives about life and the conditions of life on the periphery, climate change and a region that Europe has yet to truly discover.

Wild City explains how cities and villages emerge from the barren and harsh northern wilderness, whose unique and untamed creativity is channelled into supporting and sustaining the dreams of young people.

Cool Contrasts highlights, questions and connects the polarities that dominate life in northern Finland, attachment and detachment, light and darkness as well as technology and art – the divisions that apply not only in northern Finland but anywhere in Europe.

Read more about the cultural programme and themes on our website:
www.oulu2026.eu/en/culture-programme/

Focus areas relevant to the themes include art and technology, the cultural history within the Oulu2026 region, creative spaces and places, regional food culture, combining nature and art, festival development, the promotion of minority cultures and a sustainable future.

What Do We Mean by Culture?

The Oulu2026 activities are based on a broad understanding of culture. We hope that the cultural programme will involve collaborations and new initiatives surrounding the arts, science, creative industries and everyday culture.

What Kind of Projects Are We Looking for?

The goal of the Oulu2026 cultural programme is to achieve a permanent cultural climate change and a positive development fuelled by culture in Northern Finland.

The programme application opening in autumn 2022 is aimed at large-scale projects that require longer preparation and production time. The **“We are the Culture”** call for short-term, stand-alone community events and projects will open closer to 2026.

In the applications, a European dimension will be considered an asset. The European dimension may be expressed through the project’s theme, as a pan-European collaboration or as a cultural export element of the project.

The programme must take place entirely or partly within the Oulu2026 project region, which includes the City of Oulu as well as Ii, Pudasjärvi, Hailuoto, Kempele, Lumijoki, Liminka, Tyrnävä, Muhos, Siikajoki, Raahel, Kalajoki, Oulainen, Ylivieska, Sievi, Pyhäntä, Haapajarvi, Nivala, Haapavesi, Kärsämäki, Siikalatva, Vaala, Utajärvi, Paltamo, Suomussalmi, Kemi, Tornio, Kuusamo, Taivalkoski, Kajaani, Sotkamo, Kuhmo and Pielavesi.

Responsible Party

At the application stage, the project must have a named responsible party, which may be either a private individual or an organisation. The named responsible party is responsible for the financial and legal liabilities for the project and for the overall execution of the project.

A working group submitting an application must name an individual as the responsible part, who will be responsible for the possible funding and report on its use to the rest of the group members, the Oulu Culture Foundation and to the authorities such as the tax administration as necessary.

Application Process

The Open Call is carried out electronically. The Open Call portal opens on 3 October 2022. The call for applications closes on 9 December 2022 at 23:59 (UTC+2). The final decisions on co-funding will be sent out by e-mail by 31 May 2023.

The evaluation process begins after the close of the Open Call.

Open Call 2022 timeline



Open Call Process

The application form will be available as of 3 October 2022 on the website www.oulu2026.eu/opencall

The form will be available in Finnish and English. The applications and possible enclosures must be submitted in Finnish or English.

A registered applicant may edit the application form up until the close of the Open Call.

The call for applications closes on 9 December 2022 at 23:59 (UTC+2).

Only electronic applications submitted within the application period are accepted.

An individual applicant may participate in the application with one or several project proposals taking into consideration the applicant's resources. The applicant agrees to execute all the projects selected for the cultural programme.

The Evaluation Process

The evaluation of the applications submitted for **the Open Call is carried out by a panel of experts from various fields and representatives of the Oulu Culture Foundation.**

The applications are processed confidentially. The names of the panel members are not publicised.

The Oulu Culture Foundation is not able to give feedback on individual projects that are not selected and it does not comment on its decisions for rejecting a project. The decisions are final.

The applications are processed through a negotiated procedure as necessary, which means that the details of the applications may be discussed with the applicants after the closing date of the call for applications before the final funding decisions are made. The applicants may be asked to submit additional information if necessary.

Selection Criteria

The selections of the Oulu2026 cultural programme are based on the values and goals of the Capital of Culture concept. For the valuation of each project, the following criteria are used:

- 1** The project promotes cultural climate change through one or several of the specific Oulu2026 themes.
- 2** The project is possible for the applicant to execute independently with the funding provided.
- 3** The project has a named individual or organisation as the responsible party.
- 4** The project has been presented with a realistic and exhaustive cost estimate and financial plan which indicates the planned cost and earnings structure for the project taking into consideration the co-funding received from Oulu2026. As a rule, the maximum funding awarded for each project covers approximately 50% of the total budget.
- 5** The project is carried out primarily within the Oulu2026 region by local, regional and/or international contributors.
- 6** The projects must have a wide-reaching impact and the ability to offer unique experiences, permanent change or new models of operation to the region.
- 7** The main focus of the project timeline is on 2026. Any activities taking place prior to 2026 must support the end goals of the project.
- 8** The project must be innovative and conducive to advancing and enhancing possible daily activities.
- 9** The project must be executed taking into consideration equality and sustainability.

Meeting the above criteria is a prerequisite for the selection of projects for the cultural program; however, their fulfilment does not guarantee selection. The selection will also be based on other evaluation criteria as well as the project's suitability for the overall programme.

The purpose of the Open Call is to identify unique artistic and cultural initiatives. The purpose of the Open Call is not to offer funding for the basic, established operations of organisations and actors. Established organisations and operators in the field of art and culture can participate in the Open Call through a separate project that supplements and expands their normal operations as long as it meets the goals specified for the programme selection.

Fully self-funded projects that require no co-funding from the Oulu Culture Foundation may also be accepted to the programme. However, fully self-funded projects must also be proposed through the Open Call and they are subject to the same selection and evaluation criteria as the project to be co-funded by the Oulu Culture Foundation.

Evaluation Criteria

The projects will be evaluated on the basis of the specified programme criteria as well as a number of other factors.

- 1** Does the project have a European dimension?
- 2** How will the project speak to a wider audience? Is the project inclusive? Does the project meet the principles of accessibility?
- 3** Is the project innovative and open-minded?
- 4** Does the project promote communication and cooperation between different actors, communities, groups, cultural or sectors?
- 5** Is the project content meaningful and of high quality?
- 6** Do the project executors have the required knowledge and skills to execute the project to a high standard?
- 7** Does the project support the development of the project executor's activities?
- 8** How is the further development and establishing of the possible continuation of the activities taken into consideration?
- 9** Have the ecological and environmental impacts been considered in the project execution?
- 10** Is the project plan realistic?
- 11** Does the project have a long-term impact and what is the impact of the project in relation to its costs?
- 12** Does the project involve collaboration with one or several operators within the Oulu 2026 region or with and/or between other national or international partners?

In the project selection for the cultural programme, attention will also be paid to a balanced artistic and regional representation. The panel will also evaluate whether the project content and timeline support the overall round-the-year programme of the Capital of Culture year.

Funding

The Oulu Culture Foundation co-funds the projects selected for the cultural programme.

The co-funding offered by the Oulu Culture Foundation is determined individually for each project based on the cost estimate and financial plan submitted with the application.

The financial liability of the Foundation in the projects is limited to the co-funding provided by the Foundation to the project. All other earnings and cost management are the responsibility of the main responsible party.

The financial plan submitted with the application must include information about the application periods for and the amount of support sought from other sources. It is not necessary for the self-funding to be confirmed at the time of submitting the application but any confirmed funding may be considered an asset.

The Terms and Conditions of Co-funding

The funding is awarded on the following terms and conditions:

The Oulu Culture Foundation acts as a co-funder of the project.

As a rule, the co-funding provided by the Oulu Culture Foundation covers **approximately maximum of 50% of the overall project funding**.

The other funding for the project may be obtained through, for example, sales or fees, public and private grants/funding, project collaborations and private investments.

The self-funding may include in-kind funding for an amount that the Foundation considers reasonable for the execution of the project.

The self-funding may also include the labour of the organisation staff or volunteer work included in the project. Volunteer work is costed at EUR 10/hour.

An extensive project funding base will be considered an asset. A detailed and comprehensively specified self-funding adds to the feasibility of the project plan. The financial plans for projects spanning several years must specify the funding for each year separately for the entire duration of the project. The costs are to be itemised in the financial plan.

As a rule, funding is **not available** for the following purposes:

- The basic activities of cultural or other operators (e.g., running operation costs, seasonal repertory)
- Established events and festivals repeatedly organised under similar principles.

The following costs may be covered only **as part of a larger programme content** and in reasonable proportion to the overall budget:

- Infrastructure and property costs (e.g., rent, building service charges, repairs and building work)
- Investments (e.g., building work and equipment purchases)
- Training, continuing education, research or travel costs of individual persons

Grants

As a rule, the co-funding is not available for funding the work of individual artists through grants. However, a project budget may include compensation paid to artists in the form of grants.

An artist or a working group may apply for project funding which will be divided into a grant and other project costs. The proportion of the grant and other costs must be clarified.

The artist/artists receiving a grant must be named in advance. The grant may not be assigned to a third party.

The grant may be awarded for scientific or artistic work only. All other work must be compensated for through salaries, fees or as invoiced services. The financial plan must include all possible employer contributions.

Schedule of Payments and Reporting

The applicant may suggest a schedule of payments. Co-funding may be paid either in advance or retroactively.

The co-funding will be paid in instalments and the payments are subject to reporting. The main responsible party shall submit an electronic interim report to the Foundation at regular intervals to allow the Foundation to monitor the progress of the project.

The use of the co-funding must be reported on an annual basis in accordance with separate reporting instructions.

Communication

The Oulu2026 organisation is responsible for its part of the joint marketing of the projects and events selected for the programme. The main responsibility for the production of communication materials and the project marketing rest with the applicant, and any possible communication and marketing costs must be included in the project budget.

The executors of the projects must comply with the Oulu2026 communication and marketing guidelines in its project communication and marketing, which they will receive before the launching of their project.

Applications are also accepted in the Open Call for the right to use the Oulu2026 logo without co-funding.

Further Information

The preferred channel for all enquiries is e-mail: opencall@oulu2026.eu

Also read the frequently asked questions on our website www.oulu2026.eu/opencall

GOOD LUCK!



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