



Creative Cities  
Network

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK 2017 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS



## APPLICANT'S HANDBOOK

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The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to foster international cooperation with and between cities that have recognized culture and creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.

The member cities that form the Network come from diverse regions; have different income levels and populations. All members work together towards a common mission: placing creativity and cultural industries at the core of their urban development plans to make their cities safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable, and actively cooperate at the international level through inter-city partnerships.

The Creative Cities Network is first and foremost composed of cities ready to pool their resources, their experiences and knowledge for the common objectives laid out in the Network's [Mission Statement](#). A city is designated UNESCO Creative City based on its action plan and potential contribution to the Network's objectives set out in its application.

To become a member of the UCCN, candidate cities must submit an application that clearly demonstrates their willingness, commitment and capacity to contribute to the objectives of the Network.

NB: In order to strengthen the geographical balance of the Network, please note that a specific cooperation framework is proposed under the 2017 UCCN Call for candidate cities of the Africa region, under-represented within the Network. To know more, please refer to annexes 1 and 2 of the 2017 Designation Procedure.

This handbook is designed to provide guidance during the application process. The [UCCN Mission Statement](#), the [Designation Procedure](#) and the [Application Form](#) give further guidance and should be considered as key reference documents.

### KEY FACTORS TO CONSIDER DURING THE PREPARATION OF AN APPLICATION

In the formulation and preparation of an application to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network it is advised to carefully consider the following factors:

- **Participative process:** The preparation and formulation of the application must be led by the municipality and should result from a participative process involving relevant stakeholders and partners of the public and private sectors as well as civil society.

- **Forward-looking approach:** The cultural heritage and current creative assets of the candidate city should be the pillars to build a consistent action plan, which contributes to the sustainable urban development of the city in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. The UCCN revolves primarily around progress and upcoming projects.
- **Inclusive sustainable development:** UNESCO's Creative Cities foster sustainable urban development through creativity on an economic, cultural, social and environmental level. It is important to consider this inclusive approach to development and take all of these factors into consideration when formulating initiatives to be part of the application.
- **Longstanding commitment:** Cities considering submitting an application must be aware that a designation as UNESCO Creative City implies a continuous and active commitment towards the implementation of the UCCN's objectives. In particular, candidate cities must be committed to preparing and consistently implementing an action plan, regularly reporting on their achievements and participating in the UCCN Annual Meetings.
- **Concrete action plan:** The application should include a set of specific projects, initiatives or policies to be executed in the four years following the designation at the local and international level. The outcome and impact of these projects and initiatives are to be evaluated through a self-monitoring process.
- **Exchanges and cooperation:** Exchanges between member cities are vital to the Network and are one of its main purposes. It is therefore important for candidate cities to demonstrate their ability to develop activities and collaborative initiatives at the international level with the members of the Network.
- **Look at the big picture:** The action plan needs to fit the priorities of the city concerned as well as the UCCN's objectives, and should be adapted to the management, financial and human resources available in the city.

## PREPARING THE APPLICATION

### Who should be involved in the application process?

The city should first create a management team within the municipality or a specific department, centre or entity in charge of the development of cultural industries and/or cultural development and designate a focal point. The management team will be ultimately responsible for drafting the application and, if the city is designated, will be responsible for the day-to-day management of activities related to the Network, along with a representative of the municipality. A focal point must be designated within the team for all communications with UNESCO.

Although the application must be led by local public authorities, it should also reflect wide stakeholder consultation and support across the city and genuinely speak on behalf of public, private sectors and civil society of the city. It is therefore vital to elaborate the application in close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders such as creators, professionals from the cultural and creative industries, universities and academia, youth clubs, non-governmental organizations and associations, as well as different relevant public authorities or departments in the areas of culture, social affairs, economic development, communication, planning, etc.

Moreover, as a designation to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network involves a longstanding commitment, it is important to gather support across the different political parties.

Once relevant stakeholders have been identified, it is strongly advised to establish a consultative group that will support the management team/focal point in the preparation of the application. Such a consultative group can be made up of a diverse range of stakeholders, including high-level representatives from the municipal government, representatives from civil society, cultural practitioners and producers, industry leaders, representatives from the education sector, and other related professional associations and organizations.

**Sequence for preparing an application**

Although there is no one-size-fits-all formula for the preparation of an application, the following chart presents the main steps of this process:



When adapting this proposed sequence for preparing an application to a candidate city's context, please consider the following issues:

- Drafting and submitting an application can take longer than anticipated. Adequate time needs to be dedicated to the preparation phase, the constitution of a management team and the consultative group.
- The management team and the focal point should start by reading carefully the Mission Statement, the Application Form and the Designation Procedure. Additional information on the Network and its activities is available on the website: <http://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/>.
- A series of meetings are generally required to ensure an active participation of all the relevant local stakeholders. These serve to gather the necessary information on the cultural assets, experiences and expertise of the city, and sketch out the main lines of the city's action plan.
- The application must be submitted via email to: [ccnapplications@unesco.org](mailto:ccnapplications@unesco.org), with the "subject": Application of [name of the candidate city]. This email must include the following attachments:
  - (i) A complete list of all the documents included in the application file;
  - (ii) The official 2017 Application Form available on the UCCN's website completed;
  - (iii) A formal letter from the Applicant City's Mayor presenting the candidature;
  - (iv) A formal letter of endorsement of the candidature from the National Commission for UNESCO of the country in which the city is located;
  - (v) Two formal letters of support from active national professional associations in the creative field concerned<sup>1</sup>;
  - (vi) Three photos of the city related to the creative field concerned (JPEG, max. 3MB);
  - (vii) The "Cession of rights and register of photos" form dully filled.

There is no form or precise format requirements for the above-mentioned letters. However, it is recommended that these should be brief (no longer than two pages) and that they clearly indicate the main reasons of the signatory's full support to the application.

A maximum of four links to websites containing additional information may be included in the candidature. Please be aware, that no other documents will be taken into account during the evaluation process.

- It is required to submit the applications before the deadline to prevent any technical difficulties and ensure that the application is received correctly. UNESCO will not be responsible for the late delivery of submissions due to the lack of anticipation or possible technical difficulties. It will be the responsibility of the applicants to ensure that

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<sup>1</sup> For example, if applying to the creative field of Literature, a letter of endorsement from the national writers' association would fulfil this requirement

submissions are received by the Secretariat on time. Please note that a strict deadline applies and candidatures received after the closing date will not be considered.

## **Filling the Application Form**

Applications must be submitted using the official 2017 Application Form available on the UCCN website.

All the sections of the form must be completed for the application to be considered complete and valid. Incomplete applications will not be submitted to the evaluators.

It is recommended to avoid listing activities, initiatives or infrastructures, therefore we encourage providing brief answers to each section, including the most relevant information for assessing the cultural and creative assets of the city as well as the feasibility and potential of the proposed action plan by the evaluators.

Please note that word limits in the Form are enforced and that it will not be possible to enter more text once the limit is reached. Using the 'Word Count' function will facilitate this process.

The application must be consistent and written in clear and fluent English or French, which are the working languages of the UNESCO Secretariat. Applications submitted in other languages will not be taken into consideration. When none of the working languages are familiar to the person drafting the application, we recommend writing the application in a native language and then translating the final version through a certified translator. Poorly translated applications can lead to confusion in the evaluation phase.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How do cities apply?**

Cities are invited to apply during the Call for Applications dates announced on the website: <http://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/>. Applications must be submitted by email using the official Application Form. Applications not submitted in this required format will be neither considered nor evaluated.

### **When is the application deadline?**

The deadline for applications is announced on the UCCN website under the Call for Application section (<http://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/content/call-applications>). For the 2017 Call for Applications, the deadline will be 16 June 2017, midnight CET. Applications received after this date will not be evaluated.

### **What languages are accepted?**

Applications can only be submitted in English or French, the working languages of the UNESCO Secretariat.

### **What other documents will we need to provide with our application?**

The Application Form must only be accompanied by the presentation and endorsement letters in addition to three photos and the cession of rights form as detailed in the 2017 Application Form. Please note that no other documents will be taken into account during the evaluation process.

## **How do we send our application?**

The application must be submitted via email to: [ccnapplications@unesco.org](mailto:ccnapplications@unesco.org), with the "subject": Application of [name of the candidate city]. This email must include the following attachments:

- (i) A complete list of all the documents requested in the application file;
- (ii) The official 2017 Application Form available on the UCCN's website completed;
- (iii) A formal letter from the Applicant City's Mayor presenting the candidature;
- (iv) A formal letter of endorsement of the candidature from the National Commission for UNESCO of the country in which the city is located;
- (v) Two formal letters of support from active national professional associations in the creative field concerned<sup>2</sup>;
- (vi) Three photos of your city closely related to the creative field concerned (JPEG, max. 3MB each);
- (vii) The "Cession of rights and register of photos" form dully filled.

Please contact us at [creativecities@unesco.org](mailto:creativecities@unesco.org) in case of technical difficulties.

## **When will we know if our city's application is successful?**

The date of the announcement of the designated cities can be found on the Call for Application page of the UCCN website. If your city is not included in the list of designated cities, you may assume that your application was not successful.

To allow for a considered and impartial evaluation of the applications, we kindly ask candidate cities to refrain from requesting information on their applications during this process.

## **Who evaluates the application?**

The final decision on designation lies with the Director-General of UNESCO, following consultation with external advice provided by NGOs, academics and other independent experts as well as by the member cities organised in the seven creative fields. To protect the independence of the evaluators, no information on the identity of the authors of the evaluation is provided. Moreover, no information on the individual status of the evaluations is provided until the announcement of the results. Candidate cities are required to not exert any influence during the evaluation process. The identity of the evaluators will be kept anonymous and will not be revealed in any case, to ensure their impartiality during this process.

## **Who can we contact if we are having trouble with our application?**

It is advisable that you prepare your application as early as possible. The UNESCO Secretariat will only be able to provide assistance with your application should there be sufficient time available.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, if applying to the creative field of Literature, a letter of endorsement from the national writers' association would fulfil this requirement

Moreover, the UNESCO Secretariat is unable to follow up on the application process of the candidate cities, neither to give specific orientations nor guidance for each case.

Please contact us at [creativecities@unesco.org](mailto:creativecities@unesco.org) for any technical difficulties or general inquiries about the application process.

### **Do we need to specify a creative field in our application?**

Yes, a creative field must be specified and the application must focus on activities associated to this particular creative field. At present, the creative fields covered by the Network are: Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music.

### **Can a city apply for more than one creative field?**

No, each application must refer to only one creative field. This field should be considered as the focus of the application but not as a closed box with no intersections or connections with other creative fields. Innovative approaches in this respect are encouraged.

### **Can we involve the surrounding areas of the city in the candidature?**

It is possible to implicate the adjacent region in the application process and include an action plan comprising activities in which the city and its surrounding area are jointly involved. However, the candidate city must bear primary responsibility and accountability, as it is the city, and not the whole region, that will be designated as a UNESCO Creative City.

### **Does the size of a city matter?**

Currently, there is no limitation of the number of inhabitants to join the Network according to the Designation Procedure of the 2017 Call for Applications.

### **We have additional media items we would like to attach to our application, how could we provide these?**

Submissions can only be made using the Application Form. Items in hard copy will not be accepted.

However, a maximum of four external links to websites can be inserted within the Application Form.

### **Can we attach images, charts or diagrams to our application?**

No, it will not be possible to include these items in the Application Form. It will however be possible to include four external links to websites in the Form.

### **What budget is required?**

There is no minimal or maximum amount foreseen for the provisional budget included in the application. The evaluators will assess the quality of the action plan and the consistency of the proposed budget with the planned activities. The budget proposed should fit your city's size and potentials.