

Notes for Applicants

Resources

We have compiled the following resources on the Chinese cultural and creative industries, which we hope will be useful. This includes two recently published reports, British Council's China Now, and a list of major festivals in China:

1. [A Guide to Arts and Culture Opportunities in Mainland China](#)
2. [Arts and Technologies in China: Connecting Futures](#)
3. [China Now](#) (*British Council resource for UK arts organisations and artists with an interest in working in mainland China.*)
4. Festival Lists

Festival List

Applicants may wish to participate in a formal delegate programme, but this is not a requirement.

Theatre and Dance

- **ACT Shanghai Contemporary Theatre Festival***
Hosted by Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre (SDAC) in its various venues, is an annual platform presenting international and Chinese performing arts in Shanghai with a focus on presenting new and cutting-edge works of theatre. In 2025, the 16th ACT brought eight productions from Canada, Italy, France, Germany, UK and China from 30 August to 9 October.
- **Aranya Theater Festival***
Aranya Theater Festival eliminates the boundaries of art with the most diverse, contemporary, open, inclusive and forms, where hundreds of artists from drama, literature, music, dance, architecture and other fields co-create and coexist, creating a unique ocean of art. Aranya Theater Festival is held annually during mid-June for 10 days at a seaside community near Beijing. The 2025 edition presented 29 international and Chinese productions with 94 performances. Its "Migratory Bird 300" programme brought together 300 emerging artists from all art forms in 300 tents for 300 hours by the sea, featuring a "UK Spotlight" section.

- **Beijing Fringe Festival***

Led by Mr Meng Jinghui, well-known director and theatre expert, Beijing Fringe Festival aims to promote independent, ambitious and innovative theatre among young audiences and theatre practitioners. Apart from showcasing latest theatre productions from China and internationally, it also offers activities including seminars, creative workshops and script recitals. The Beijing Fringe Festival is annually held during September, lasting for a month. The 2025 edition featured 20 productions by young creators, six digital works, six readings, and two forums.

- **China Shanghai International Arts Festival**

Founded in 1999, China Shanghai International Arts Festival (CSIAF) is a state-level annual international arts festival hosted by the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism and organized by the Shanghai Municipal People's Government. CSIAF has eight sections including the performing arts fair and forum (ChinaSPAF) which is the leading annual marketplace for new work from China, connecting creators and arts professionals worldwide. In 2025, CSIAF presented 55 productions with 129 performances and 1,200 activities from 17 October to 27 November.

- **Guangdong Dance Festival**

The Guangdong Dance Festival is one of the brilliant features of the Guangdong culture. The festival not only features the forefront of international dance innovators, but also establishes young and emerging artists from China. There are performances both in theatre and public space as well as collaborations with organizations from different fields. The festival is held annually in autumn for one week.

- **Modern Drama Valley Theatre Festival***

One of the most influential theatre festivals in China, Modern Drama Valley presents domestic and international plays including Chinese drama, pop theatre, masterpiece adaption and black box theatre at venues around Jing'an District, Shanghai. In 2025, 20 domestic and international productions hit the stage for a total of 84 performances, along with more than 200 diverse experiences in satellite venues in each subdistrict and town from 25 April to 2 June.

- **Shekou Theatre Festival***

Shekou Theatre Festival is a theatre festival that uses a fully independent incubation model to complete the entire process of work creation and performance. The original incubated performances are staged in non-conventional theatre spaces, such as streets, industrial heritages and coastal villas. In 2025, Shekou Theatre Festival presented over 100 activities including site specific performances, new writing readings, forum, outreach events and community events from 5 to 16 November.

- **Wuzhen Theatre Festival***

The Wuzhen Theatre Festival is an annual theatre event in the ancient water town of Wuzhen, Zhejiang Province. A grand celebration of the art of performance and a hub for cultural exchange amidst the stunning backdrop of ancient canals and alleys, the festival consists of various inter-related parts: the Specially Invited Plays, the Emerging Theatre Artists Competition, the Outdoor Carnival, and the Wuzhen Dialogues, etc. The 2025 edition presented 25 local and international productions from 10 countries with 71 performances, along with carnivals / street theatres in public space from 16 to 26 October.

Music

- **Beijing Music Festival**
The Beijing Music Festival (BMF), presented by the Beijing Municipal Government, was founded in 1998 by conductor Long Yu who holds the position of the Chairman of the Beijing Music Festival Artistic Committee. Apart from presenting internationally renowned musicians and orchestras, BMF encourages both western and Chinese contemporary music and has been active in commissioning and presenting premieres of new works. The 2025 edition presented 11 performances from 26 countries and regions from 10 to 24 October.
- **Guangzhou Jazz Festival**
First held in 2015 by Guangzhou Xinghai Concert Hall, the Guangzhou jazz festival is a real cultural event for jazz lovers with the biggest lineup and the top domestic jazz musicians gathered together. The 2025 edition presented 4 performances with 20 activities from September to November.
- **Midi Music Festival**
Midi Music Festival is among China's largest rock music festivals and is hosted by the Beijing Midi School of Music. The festival has become the driving force to push forward the development and promotion of rock music, folk, and electronica.
- **Shenzhen Tomorrow Festival**
Tomorrow Festival is a non-mainstream music festival in OCT-LOFT, Shenzhen. Tomorrow Festival covers various styles of music, including experimental rock, avant-garde, free jazz and world. It focuses on the artistic prospective and creativity.
- **Strawberry Music Festival**
Strawberry Music Festival is an outdoor music event created and organised by China's largest independent record label Modern Sky. The festival is held annually in several cities in China, featuring artists from China and abroad.
- **Tiandi World Music Festival**
With the theme of world music, the festival is the largest world music festival in China. Produced by XINTIANDI, it brings together master musical groups from all over the world. The festival uses music as the bridges to bring more diversified and rich world cultures to China and Chinese culture to the world.

Visual Arts

- **ART021 Shanghai**
Founded in 2013, ART021 Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair is one of the earliest and largest art fairs in China. It commits to cultivating a global communication and trading platform for galleries, museums, art institutions, collectors, and art lovers, constructing the reputation of Chinese contemporary art, while also actively interacting with global art market. The 2024 edition attracted 131 exhibitors from 20 countries and regions between 7 to 10 November.
- **Design Shanghai**
Design Shanghai is one of the world's most prestigious international design events and Asia's premier design event. Constantly breaking new ground, it has set a precedent in China's ever-

growing design community. The 2025 edition attracted over 600 design brands from more than 30 countries and regions.

- Guangzhou Design Triennial

Guangzhou Design Triennial is a brand new initiative by Guangdong Museum of Art (GDMoA) that aims to be an international platform for world-leading contemporary design and design-led research. The inaugural edition themed on “The Warm-beings” curated works by 100 artists, designers, and ensembles from 27 countries and regions between 16 January to 31 May 2024.

- JINGART Beijing

JINGART Beijing aims to combine the dynamic culture of Beijing with the international art market. Presenting the best quality art and design of different eras and genres, JINGART builds a diverse platform for local and international exhibitors, collectors, artists and art lovers. JINGART is managed by the team of ART021 Shanghai. The 2025 edition attracted 50 exhibitors from 11 cities between 2 to 25 May.

- Shanghai Biennale

Launched in 1996, the Shanghai Biennale is not only the first international biennial of contemporary art in China, but also one of the most influential in Asia. Since 2012, the Power Station of Art has become the main organizer and permanent exhibition location of the Shanghai Biennale. The 15th edition will be held from 8 November 2025 to 31 March 2026 with a theme on “Does the Flower Hear the Bee?”.

- West Bund Art & Design

West Bund Art and Design has been dedicated to providing a platform for international and local galleries to showcase high-quality modern and contemporary artworks in Shanghai. Accompanying a diversity of exhibitions and events at museums and galleries, West Bund Art & Design enriches the art map of Shanghai and makes the city a vital stop on the global art calendar. The 2024 edition attracted 122 exhibitors from 22 countries between 8-10 November.

Literature

- Beijing International Book Festival

Held alongside with the Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF), the Beijing International Book Festival hosts exhibitions and cultural events to engage with readers and book lovers. The 2025 edition of BIBF attracted 1,700 exhibitors from 80 countries and regions between 18 to 22 June.

- Shanghai International Literary Festival

The Shanghai International Literary Festival, started in 2003, began as a sister festival to the Hong Kong International Literary Festival. Hosted at M on the Bund and the Glamour Bar, the Festival grew from small beginnings to China’s leading, and largest, English-language literary event. The 2025 edition invited 30 writers attending over 50 events including the “Poetry Night” between 12 to 18 August.

* Festivals marked with an asterisk (*) have kindly agreed to offer a contact point for our Festival Travel Grantees, providing recommendations for performances and activities, as well as advice on local logistics.

Budget

As part of the application, you will be asked to submit a budget for your trip. Creating a well-researched project budget for your application will enable you to identify what is achievable within the timeframe and resources you have available. It will also enable you to identify risks and prepare for changes as they arise.

Costs you may wish to consider include:

Travel and transportation	Train / rail / fuel for participants, or shipping costs for materials/items	Either Per Diem cost, or total cost per trip per person – often an estimate
Visa costs	Usually, visitor visas	Cost per application – including visa fee and travel to visa centre if required
Subsistence / per diems	Daily allowance for food and drink when travelling to a different country	Cost per person per day (usually 2-3 meals a day)
Accommodation	Hotel room	Cost per night (check any additional taxes) - often an estimate
Travel insurance	Worldwide cover	If not provided by organisational policy
Tickets	Cost of attending arts events	Either actual cost or estimate of ticket budget
Contingency	A sum of money to cover unexpected costs associated with the effective delivery of the trip	This grant has a limit of 10% contingency

Please note, you can request an additional access budget to enable you to make this trip e.g. sign language interpreters, costs associated with making hotels/travel more accessible, providing transport for disabled participants or costs for a support worker.

Access costs	For example, costs relating to making the trip accessible to d/Deaf, hard of hearing, or blind applicants (e.g., relevant sign language interpreters), or costs associated with making	Can be a day rate for sign language interpreters or an accessibility expert. Or it could be costs associated with material items/alterations to make a venue more accessible for your project or
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	venues more accessible, or providing transport for disabled participants/partners. It may also be costs for a support worker to support an applicant who requires this	ensuring transport which is suitable for disabled participants
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Sometimes, we don't know how much certain budget lines will cost when we write our budgets. It's still important that we estimate and anticipate these costs and ensure there is contingency planning in place for unforeseen expenses. This is particularly important for international projects where global-socioeconomic changes, and natural disasters, can have a big impact on budgets. If you don't know what your costs will be on writing your budget:

- Use historical/market data you can always ask vendors for rates and ask experienced people around you.
- Round out figures to the nearest 00s for budget lines where prices can fluctuate, for example air tickets for international travel.
- Contingency can be one of the headings. Most projects keep around 5-10% of the total budget to cover any contingency costs. This grant has a limit of 10% for contingency.

Assessment

Assessment criteria 1: Quality (25%)

The organisation sending a representative is of high artistic/creative quality and has the capacity to develop international connections.

The assessors will look for:

- Evidence of a **track record of artistic quality** in the arts programme.
- Evidence that the organisation has the **capacity and/or track record in developing international projects**.
- **Suitability of the individual who will travel**, ensuring that they have the ability to instigate and manage international collaborative projects.

Assessment criteria 2: Suitability (25%)

The proposed trip is relevant and will provide opportunities for the Wales participant to increase their understanding of the Chinese cultural sector as well as develop networks with peers in mainland China.

The assessors will look for:

- Evidence that the arts organisation selected in China is **an appropriate match for the Welsh organisation** and presents work of high artistic/creative quality.
- Evidence that the applicant has identified potential outcomes from the trip.

Assessment criteria 3: Management (25%)

The proposed trip is well planned and resourced.

The assessors will look for:

- Evidence that **the proposed trip has been well planned** and that it has considered reasonable risks and mitigations.
- **A realistic budget** which has been well researched.
- **A realistic timeline** to carry out the trip.

Assessment criteria 4: Inclusivity (25%)

The application increases the visibility, recognition and influence of women, disabled and other underrepresented UK creative professionals.

The assessors will look for:

- Applicants from **organisations who have not engaged with the British Council before**.
- Applicants that can demonstrate that they will otherwise not be able to make this trip.
- Evidence that the applicant has plans to share their learning with the cultural sector.

Diversity and Inclusion

As an international cultural relations organisation, British Council works towards mainstreaming of our EDI principles and practices across all our work strands. This includes in how we engage with stakeholders, participants and partners.

We ask our grantees to align with the British Council's inclusive approach. For more information, please read the following document

[Equality, diversity and inclusion | British Council](#)

We will assess your application on how it demonstrates a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and how it creates opportunities for underrepresented groups or communities.

Applications can include a short description of what diversity and/or inclusion means in the context of your project and countries and share more information on the underrepresented communities you intend to work with. You will need to share what EDI means for your context, partners and locations and tell us how that has informed the projects design and delivery.

We acknowledge that it is not always possible to have provision of accessible venues in different country contexts, but you can describe what access means in your country context, and what a good standard of access might mean in your country if this is the case.

Access Support for Completing Your Application

You are welcome to submit your answers to certain questions (where marked in the text) via a video format. For video submissions, please submit a different video for each answer and share a private YouTube link within the response box. Videos will not be assessed on quality, but we ask that we can clearly see and hear the speaker. Submissions can be in British Sign Language. Please note videos should all be within the maximum time indicated after each question.

You can request funds for access costs that you have incurred in completing this application form. Access costs might include support workers, sign language interpreters, technical tools or mental health support. They are defined as costs that you incur due to a disability that others would not incur. This support is available to all disabled applicants, whether they are successful or not.

The support is available on two conditions:

- 1: You fully complete all sections of the application form and upload all required supporting documents.
- 2: Your application is submitted by the deadline.

You can request this support through Application Form - Section C. Access costs for completing the application form.

Please note that applications will not be assessed on the quality of written English.

Contact

If you have further questions, please contact Arts@britishcouncil.org.cn