

Application Guidelines



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Overview of Mobility First!

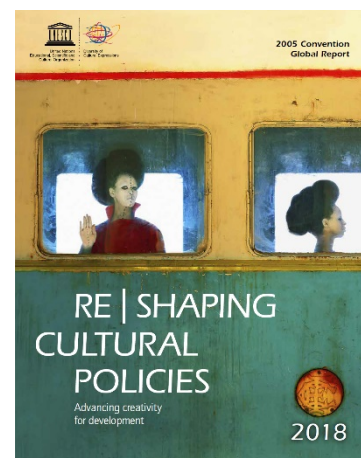
When thinking about mobility, people have come to “imagine that mobility is border crossing, as though borders came first, and mobility, second. The truth is more the other way around.”¹

In the area of arts and culture, we refer to cultural mobility as "the temporary cross-border movement of artists and other cultural professionals. Certain forms of mobility relate to the individual (e.g. networking, residencies etc.); others are intrinsically connected to the mobility of works or performances in another country. (...) Mobility is not only understood as occasional movements across national borders that may be useful to gain professional experience required for career advancement, as well as advance artistic endeavour, but more as an integral part of the regular work life of artists and other cultural professionals.”²

In this context, the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#) launched **Mobility First! – ASEF Cultural Mobility Initiative** in 2017. Through this initiative, ASEF supports the mobility of artists and cultural professionals for cross-border activities that include participation in residencies, workshops, conferences, and festivals, that would enrich their professional growth and initiate a multiplier effect to others. Mobility support is provided to selected individuals and arts organisations for travel from Asia to Europe, Europe to Asia and within Asia.

At the end of Mobility First!’s 1st year, it was recognised in UNESCO’s [Reshaping Cultural Policies Report \(2nd edition\)](#), the only global document on trends in cultural development, where limited funding for cultural mobility has yet again been recognised as a key challenge to international cultural co-operation.

ASEF's Mobility First! travel grant has been acknowledged as a "success story" for multilateral cooperation in bridging existing gaps in support for artists' mobility.



¹ Ludden, David, 2003, “Maps in the Mind and the Mobility of Asia,” p.1062, <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~dludden/davidludden62-4.pdf>

² Ericarts, 2008, “Mobility Matters,” http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/policy/cultural-creative-industries/documents/mobility-matters-report_en.pdf



“One of the success stories is the Asia-Europe Foundation’s ‘Mobility First’ Fund, launched in April 2017 in recognition of existing funding gaps to support artists’ mobility in the Asia-Asia and Asia-Europe contexts.”

ASEF’s Mobility First! also contributes to the pursuit of the United Nations’ [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), in particular:



SDG #10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

by facilitating the mobility of artists and cultural professionals (target 10.7); and by implementing the principle of differential treatment for developing countries, thereby contributing to achieving a balanced flow of cultural works (target 10.a);



SDG #4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning for all

by increasing the number of both youth and adults who participate in activities to acquire skills needed for employment in the cultural and creative industries (target 4.4); and by supporting the foundation (e.g. partner meetings/networking) for long-lasting collaboration and learning



SDG #5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women

by integrating gender equality as part of the selection criteria for the Mobility First! grant (target 5.c); and by increasing the participation of women at leadership programmes in the cultural sector and thereby contributing to equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life

(target 5.5)

ASEF's Mobility First! grant is publicly funded by 51 Asian and European countries, the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat in the framework of the [Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\)](#), an informal political dialogue process.



About ASEM

The [Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\)](#) is an informal intergovernmental process established in 1996 to foster dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. Currently, there are 53 ASEM partners: 30 European countries, 21 Asian countries, the European Union and the Asean Secretariat.

Within the process, Asian and European leaders meet at Summit meetings held every 2 years in Asia and Europe alternatively. This is the highest level of decision making process. In addition to the heads of state, Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission, and the ASEAN Secretary General attends.

As a build up to the Summit, ASEM Ministerial meetings take place amongst different areas of focus. In the area of Culture, 51 Asian and European Culture Ministers gather to discuss issues, trends and challenges that are of mutual interest.

About ASEF

In 1997, the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#) was established by ASEM partners as its only permanent institution. The Foundation seeks to promote understanding, strengthen relationships and facilitate cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. The contributions of ASEF to the civil societies are acknowledged by Leaders at the ASEM Summits.

Located in Singapore, ASEF reports to a board of governors and is publicly funded by voluntary contributions from its 53 ASEM partners. In 2017, our total expenditure amounts to approximately S\$6 million, of which nearly 70% of this sum is project expenditure. The cost of many ASEF projects are also shared by other institutions as well as private corporations of ASEM countries.



Eligibility Criteria

Applications are welcomed from individual artists/cultural professionals and arts organisations that are eligible as per the following guidelines.

Individuals

- Artists and cultural professionals from any artistic genre (such as visual arts, performing arts, film, heritage etc.) may apply. Applications focusing on contemporary artistic and cultural disciplines are encouraged.
- Applicants should be citizens of ASEM member countries³ and are seeking support for travel within the ASEM region.
- Applicants may seek travel support to participate in any of the 7 types of eligible activities listed below in the section on *What types of activities are supported?*

Arts organisations

- Arts organisations may apply for up to 5 artists/cultural professionals whom they want to invite for the event they are organising
- Arts organisations that operate in any artistic or cultural genre may apply. Non-profit arts organisations will be prioritised.
- Arts organisations should be based in any of the ASEM member countries and operating in the ASEM region (nationally or bi-regionally)
- Arts organisations should be applying for travel support for individuals to participate in any of the 7 types of eligible activities listed below in the section on *What types of activities are supported?*

Note: For past grantees (both individuals and organisations), Mobility First! will not be accepting re-application for a period of 1 year. For example, if your application to Mobility First! was successful in 2018, you will only be allowed to re-apply in 2020.

³ The ASEM countries are: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Lao PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, Viet Nam.



What types of activities are supported?

Through this initiative, ASEF supports the mobility of artists and cultural professionals for participation in the following 7 types of activities:

1. Workshops or trainings
2. Conferences or forums
3. Festivals, biennales, or international exhibitions
4. Artists' or writers' residencies
5. Partner meetings to set up or maintain an existing partnership
6. Practice-led research
7. "Go and see"/ short-term exploration/ networking

In addition, the following focus areas will be prioritised:

- Skills transfer/ knowledge exchange
- Innovation in arts and culture
- Local development
- Art and social issues: the role of art and artists in society

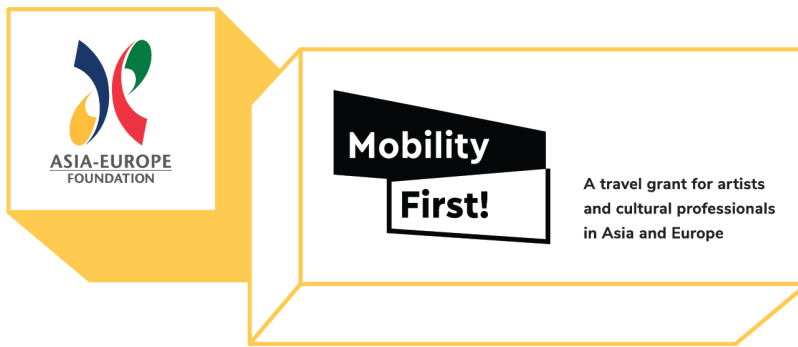


Travel regions

Mobility First! prioritises cultural mobility from Asia to Europe; from Europe to Asia; and, within Asia. All travel must be international. In the ASEM context, the list below indicates the region each member country is belongs to.

Asia	Europe
Australia	Austria
Bangladesh	Belgium
Brunei Darussalam	Bulgaria
Cambodia	Croatia
China	Cyprus
India	Czech Republic
Indonesia	Denmark
Japan	Estonia
Kazakhstan	Finland
Korea	France
Lao PDR	Germany
Malaysia	Greece
Mongolia	Hungary
Myanmar	Ireland
New Zealand	Italy
Pakistan	Latvia
Philippines	Lithuania
Russian Federation ⁴	Luxembourg
Singapore	Malta
Thailand	Netherlands
Viet Nam	Norway
	Poland
	Portugal
	Romania
	Slovakia
	Slovenia
	Spain
	Sweden
	Switzerland
	United Kingdom

⁴ Note: Russian Federation is considered as an Asian country in the ASEM context.



Grant amounts

The grant amounts for 2019 are as follows:

Grant amounts (up to these maximum caps)	
Asia to Europe and vice-versa	SGD 2,000
Australia/New Zealand to Europe and vice-versa	SGD 2,300
Russia to Europe and vice-versa	SGD 1,000
Intra-Asia	SGD 1,000

Additional funding is available for people with disabilities and special needs.

Equal opportunities

Mobility First! is an equal opportunities programme. Applications from artists and cultural professionals of any ASEM nationality, ethnicity, caste, creed, gender or disability are welcome.



Application and reporting processes

1. Individuals and arts organisations will have to complete the online application form. Links to the application form will be made available on <https://mobilityfirst.asef.org/>.
2. Upon successful application, ASEF will request for a scanned passport copy from each grantee.
3. For individuals receiving support, ASEF will issue:
 - An **official letter of offer**
 - The letter of offer can be used as the supporting document to facilitate the visa application process
 - **Terms of Reference (ToR)**

Please note that the grantee may receive the 1st 50% of the allocated grant amount after travel has commenced. The remaining 50% will be transferred post-travel and after ASEF receives the required post-event report.

In some cases, depending on the grantee's event dates, 100% of the allocated grant amount may be transferred in a single tranche post-travel.

ASEF reserves the right to determine the payment type.

4. In the case of arts organisations, ASEF will provide a **Partnership Agreement**, indicating the terms of funding and other partnership particulars. The partner organisation ensures the participation and attendance of each of the selected artists and is expected to bear their initial travel costs.

100% of the allocated grant amount will be reimbursed after completion of the event and submission of all supporting documents required.

5. All artists and cultural professionals receiving mobility support are expected to complete an online post-event report no later than 4 weeks after travel has ended.



Deadlines

Please refer to the timeline below or <https://mobilityfirst.asef.org/>.

The deadline for each round of application will be **11:59 PM GMT+8 (Singapore time)**.

Timeline	
Open call	1 to 31 January
Results	28 February
Travel period	15 March to 31 July
Open call	15 February to 15 March
Results	15 April
Travel period	1 May to 15 September
Open call	1 to 30 April
Results	31 May
Travel period	15 June to 31 October
Open call	15 May to 15 June
Results	15 July
Travel period	1 August to 15 December



Assessment Process

What happens after submitting my application?

After receiving your application, the Mobility First! Selection Committee will review your application form thoroughly. Successful applicants will be notified via email with an official letter of offer.

Who will be on the Mobility First! Selection Committee?

The Selection Committee consists of:



Ms Anupama SEKHAR, Director, Culture, ASEF

Anupama joined ASEF in January 2009. She is currently the Director of the Culture Department and is actively engaged in facilitating multilateral cultural co-operation among 51 countries across Asia and Europe.

Anupama is in charge of the department's day-to-day operations as well as its overall programme portfolio, which comprises of policy dialogue, information platforms, and support to artists.

In particular, she designs and manages the Department's work in the field of cultural policy with the aim of stimulating analysis and engagement reflective of current debates in the arts in Asia and Europe, as well as channeling policy ideas to the [Culture Ministers' Meeting](#) of the [Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\)](#).

Currently, Anupama is part of UNESCO's [Expert Facility](#) to support capacity development initiatives for the implementation of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

She holds degrees in English Literature and International Studies. She is a trained dancer in the Indian classical style of *Bharatnatyam*. Prior to joining ASEF, Anupama worked with the International Labour Organisation and with independent arts spaces in India.



Ms Fatima AVILA, Project Manager, Culture, ASEF

Fatima joined ASEF in May 2016. She is currently Project Manager in the Culture Department and is in charge of [Mobility First! - ASEF Cultural Mobility Initiative](#), which was set up in recognition of existing funding gaps, particularly in the Asia-to-Europe and Asia-to-Asia contexts.

Fatima also works on [ASEF Unplugged: Conversations on the Arts in Asia and Europe](#), a new event-series offering more informal and intimate spaces for open, authentic and peer-to-peer conversations. She previously supported the ASEF Policy Panels at the [7th ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting \(ASEM CMM7\)](#), the [8th ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting \(ASEM CMM8\)](#), and the [7th World Summit on Arts and Culture](#).

Prior to ASEF, Fatima has worked extensively in the visual arts field as gallery manager of Tin-aw Art Gallery and Manila Contemporary (Valentine Willie Fine Art) where she was able to navigate Southeast Asia through artistic and institutional collaborations by means of exhibitions and commercial projects.

Fatima holds a Master's degree and a Bachelor's degree in Business Management from the University of Edinburgh in the United Kingdom and Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines respectively.

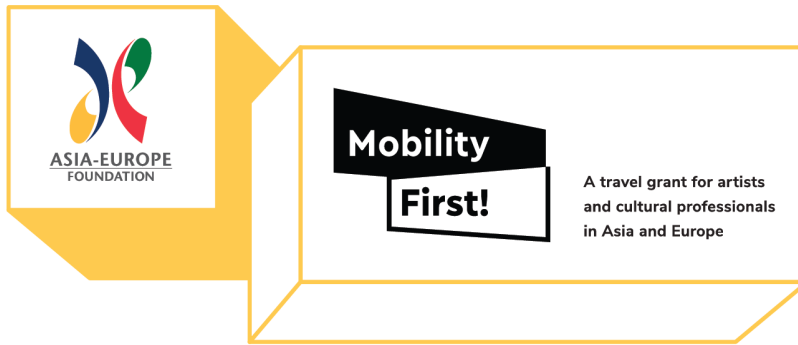


Mr Ferdinand RICHARD, President, [Roberto Cimetta Fund \(RCF\)](#)

Ferdinand is the founder/director of the AMI Association in Marseille (since 1985), a multi-sectoral cultural development platform with a consistent international cooperation programme. He is also co-founder of La Friche Belle-de-Mai (since 1992) and has been Deputy Director for the past 8 years under architect Jean Nouvel.

Ferdinand is concurrently the President of the Roberto Cimetta Fund (since 2009), an international non-profit organisation that funds the mobility of artists & cultural professionals in Europe and neighbouring regions.

Ferdinand is a member of governance of the Institut du Monde Arabe in the Hauts-de-France Region (since 2016). He is also the Founder-President of Global Grand Central, a global internet platform for artists and cultural projects, archives, and narratives (since 2017).



In addition, Ferdinand is a board member of the Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles-France (since 2002), as well as President of The European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (re-named today Culture Action Europe). Further, he is a collaborator/expert for Agenda 21 for Culture (United Cities and Local Governments) since 2006. He is also a premier coordinator and expert of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity/UNESCO experts panel (2006-2015).

Ferdinand was also a musician and producer (1971-2000).



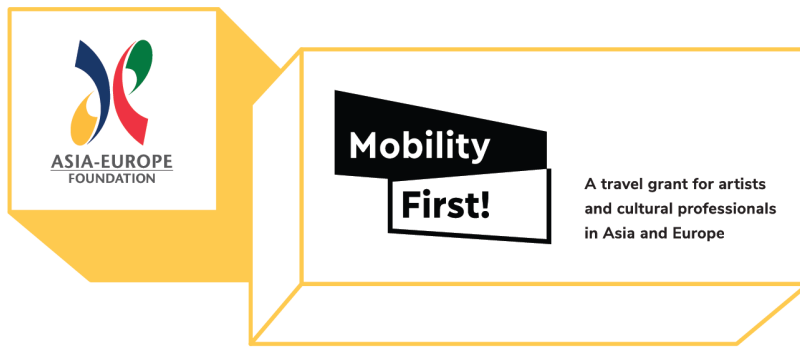
Mr Tay Tong, Former Director, Arts Network Asia (ANA)

Tay was the Managing Director of TheatreWorks (Singapore) and its space, 72-13, a conservation building, for a total of 20 years. Tay has 30 years of professional experience. He joined the company in 1989 as its Production Manager and was appointed the Managing Director in 1999 after he completed his MA at Goldsmiths College, University of London. In the same year, he was also appointed as Director, Arts Network Asia (ANA). From June 2013 till November 2017, Tay was concurrently the Aide to the Festival Director of the Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA).

Tay was the Director of Arts Network Asia (ANA). Through the 18-year-old ANA, Tay brokered greater intra-Asia dialogues and exchanges. ANA provides project grants and mobility grants to artists and cultural workers to develop connectivity and a network of dialogues within Asia. Between 2012 - 2016, this network has expanded to include Europe with the Creative Encounters Programme, a partnership between ANA and the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

Tay is an advocate for engagement with diverse cultures and supports the philosophy of 'celebrating differences' and cultural negotiation. And this forms the pillar to two key inter-cultural, multi-disciplinary and capacity building programmes in South East Asia. Tay produced the biennial Flying Circus Project or FCP, a process-based multi-disciplinary, long-term research and development programme in theatre, dance, music, visual arts, film and ritual, since its inception in 1996. From 2007 to 2013, other than in Singapore, the FCP has been sited in Vietnam, Cambodia and most recently in 2013, in Myanmar. This required Tay to work on the ground in-situ over a two-year period before the FCP descended on the country.

Between 2002 and 2012, Tay also managed a capacity building programme, The Continuum Asia Project in Luang Prabang, Laos, working with elders and youth there to explore a sustainable developmental intervention through Asian heritage and traditional arts.



For the past three years, Tay is an adjunct fellow at the Singapore Management University. He conducts a 15-week Arts Leadership programme each year, to encourage creative thinking and practice among arts management, business and law undergraduates at the University. His accolades include being the first and only arts manager to date, to be awarded the Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry's Culture Award, in 1996, in recognition for his contribution to the arts in Singapore. Tay also sits on various advisory panels in Singapore and internationally. He, too, was on the 2017 nominating panel for the Bellagio Residency by the Rockefeller Foundation.

When will the results of each open call be announced?

In 2019, Mobility First! will have 4 calls for applications. Each call is open for 1 month, and the results are announced 1 month after each deadline.

Please refer to the Deadlines section of this document for the exact dates.

Version: 14 Dec 2018