

**Mobility**

**First!**

A travel grant for artists  
and cultural professionals  
in Asia and Europe

# **Application Guidelines**

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# Overview

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The [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#) promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, governance, economy, sustainable development, public health and media.

With culture being one of ASEF's priority areas, [Mobility First! – ASEF Cultural Mobility Initiative](#) – our travel grant for artists and cultural professionals, supports the mutual cultural practice of those working in the arts.

We invite eligible arts practitioners from Asia and Europe to apply to our periodic competitive open calls either through an individual application or an arts and cultural organisation application. International travel support is then granted to selected cultural professionals in Asia and Europe to participate in activities that are integral to their professional development; that would initiate a multiplier effect to others and benefit the society. Mobility support is provided to selected applicants for travel from Asia to Europe, Europe to Asia and within Asia.

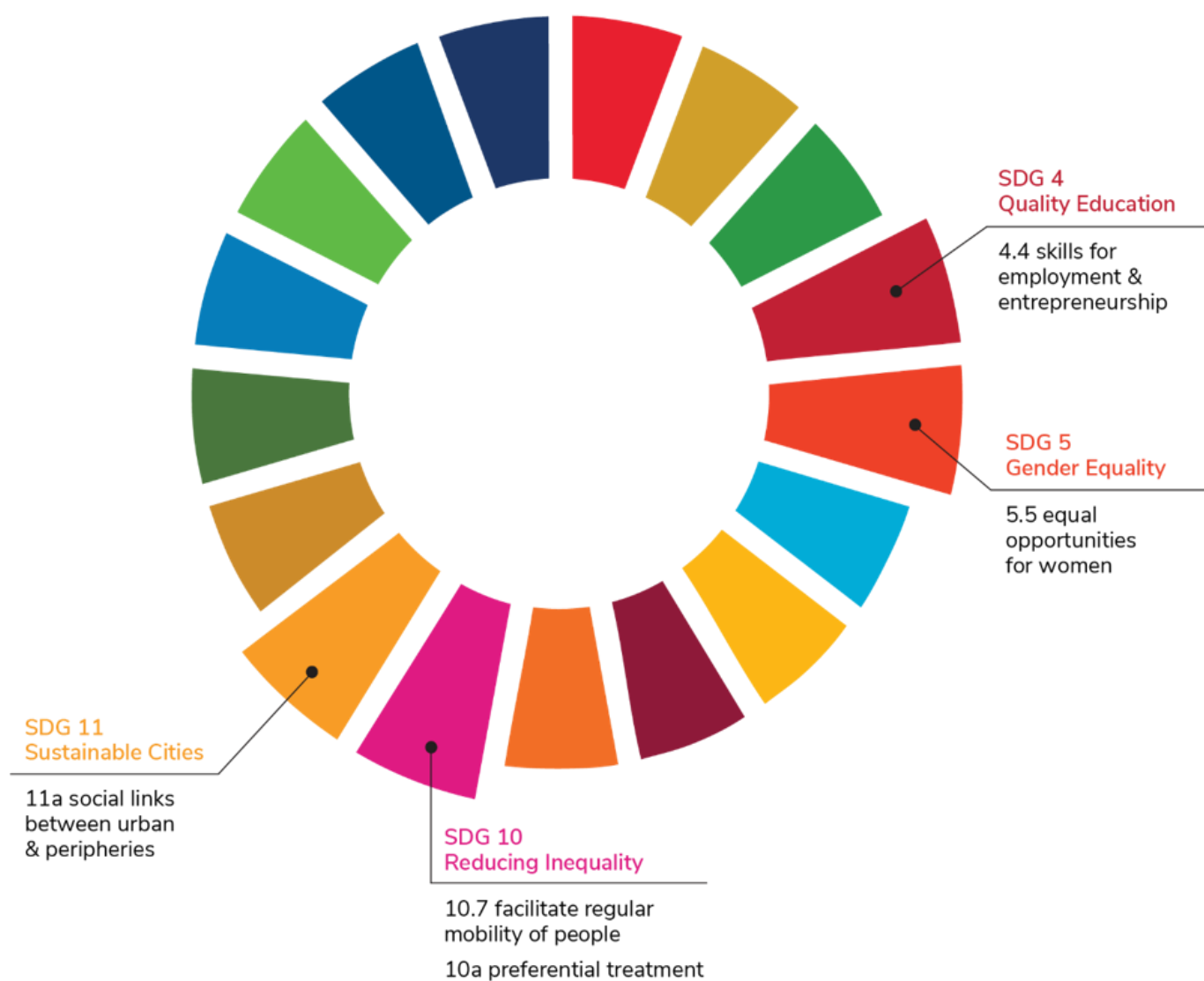
In 2017, *Mobility First!* was recognised in [UNESCO's Reshaping Cultural Policies Report \(2<sup>nd</sup> edition\)](#), as a "success story" in bridging existing funding gaps to support cultural mobility in the Asia-Asia and Asia-Europe contexts.

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 intergovernmental process established in 1996 to foster dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe.

2019 marks the third year of *Mobility First!* and to date, we have supported **312** cultural professionals to facilitate cultural exchange between 48 ASEM countries.

Have a look at the testimonials from our [2018](#) and [2019](#) *Mobility First!* grantees.

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



# About ASEM

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The [Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\)](#) is an intergovernmental process established in 1996 to foster dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. Presently it comprises 53 Partners: 30 European and 21 Asian countries, the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat. ASEM addresses political, economic, financial, social, cultural, and educational issues of common interest in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership.

The initial ASEM Partnership in 1996 consisted of 15 EU Member States and 7 ASEAN Member States plus China, Japan, Korea and the European Commission.

The ASEM Summit is a biennial meeting between the Heads of State and Government, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

# About ASEF

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The [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#) promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, governance, economy, sustainable development, public health and media.

ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

ASEF runs more than 25 projects a year, consisting of around 100 activities, mainly conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, publications, and online platforms, together with about 150 partner organisations. Each year over 3,000 Asians and Europeans participate in ASEF's activities, and much wider audiences are reached through its various events, networks and web-portals.

# About #MobilityFirst Special Open Call

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ASEF, through its **Mobility First!** travel grant, is launching a special open call prioritising the mobility support of artists and cultural professionals from the following six countries, who are looking to strengthen their artistic and cultural practice through connecting with their counterparts in both Asia and Europe.

The mobility call is specifically aimed for artists and cultural professionals from the following six Asian countries:

Bangladesh

Myanmar

India

Pakistan

Lao PDR

Viet Nam

ASEF, with the support of the [Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), is providing international travel support to selected cultural professionals to participate in activities<sup>1</sup> which enables the objective of ***skills transfer/knowledge exchange; innovation in arts and culture; local cultural development and art and society***, as well as activities that are integral to their professional development; that would initiate a multiplier effect to others and benefit the society.

Mobility support is provided to selected applicants for travel from Asia to Europe, and within Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> These activities include workshops or trainings, conferences or forums, festivals, biennales or international exhibitions, artists' or writers' residencies, partner meetings to set up or maintain an existing partnership and practice-led research trips.

# Applicant Profile

Who is eligible to  
apply for the  
#MobilityFirst Special  
Open Call?

I am a citizen of one of  
the six ASEM country  
listed above but I am  
currently living in a  
non-ASEM country. Am  
I eligible to apply?

Artists and cultural professionals  
who are nationals of any of the  
six ASEM partner countries  
listed below:

- Bangladesh
- India
- Lao PDR
- Myanmar
- Pakistan
- Viet Nam

If you are currently  
living/residing in a non-ASEM  
country, it will not affect your  
application.

The important pre-condition  
would be that you are a citizen  
of one of the six ASEM partner  
countries listed above and you  
are travelling to an ASEM  
country through **Mobility First!**.

The list of ASEM partner countries are:

## ASIA

Australia	Indonesia	Mongolia	Singapore
Bangladesh	Japan	Myanmar	Thailand
Brunei Darussalam	Kazakhstan	New Zealand	Viet Nam
Cambodia	Korea	Pakistan	
China	Lao PDR	Philippines	

India

Malaysia

Russian Federation.<sup>2</sup>

## EUROPE

Austria	Finland	Lithuania	Slovakia
Belgium	France	Luxembourg	Slovenia
Bulgaria	Germany	Malta	Spain
Croatia	Greece	Netherlands	Sweden
Cyprus	Hungary	Norway	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Ireland	Poland	United Kingdom
Denmark	Italy	Portugal	
Estonia	Latvia	Romania	

**Is there a minimum age to apply?**

Yes, applicants must be at least **18 years old** at the time of travel in order to apply.

There is no maximum age limit and artists and cultural professionals who are in the early or veteran stages of their professional career are welcome to apply.

**As an artist/cultural professional, are there specific fields of art that I need to be working in to be eligible?**

We welcome applications from artists or cultural professionals from any artistic genre (such as visual arts, performing arts, film, heritage etc.).

The field of art that you work in does not have any impact on the evaluation of your application.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Russian Federation is considered as an Asian country in the ASEM context.



Can we apply as a  
group of  
artists/cultural  
professionals?

For the #MobilityFirst Special Open Call, we are only accepting **individual** applications made directly by artists and cultural professionals who are looking to participate in cultural activities within the ASEM region.

# Travel Regions

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Where can I travel to?

The #MobilityFirst Special Open Call supports international travel for the following mobility routes: **Asia to Europe** and **within Asia**.

Applicants should be seeking support for travel within the ASEM region.

Can I travel within my  
own country?

No, **Mobility First!** only supports international travel and applicants cannot participate in activities which involve travel within their country of residence.

# Mobility First's guiding principles and priorities

**Mobility First!** support is given depending on how well the application has managed to:

- Convey specific and well thought out purpose of journey and their mobility objectives
- Closely fulfil one or more of **Mobility First!**'s focus areas of skills transfer/knowledge exchange, innovation in arts and culture, local cultural development and art and society

## Purpose of mobility

In your application, you will need to:

- Provide a description of the activity you intend to participate in and its main objective
- Describe what you are intending to do during the proposed activity
- Explain what your personal and professional objectives are for participating in the proposed activity and the impact of the activity on your professional development
- Illustrate how this mobility will impact on your arts ecosystem and on the host organisation/ collaborator/destination community and arts ecosystem you are intending to travel to

## Focus areas

The mobility of the applicant should deliver on one or more of the following focus areas, regardless of the type/format of activity you intend to participate in

The following focus areas will be prioritised in for the #MobilityFirst Special Open Call:

Skills transfer/ knowledge exchange	Innovation in arts and culture
Activities which encourage sharing and acquiring of new/ additional knowledge and skills, allowing applicants to perform at a greater capacity that would contribute to their professional growth and development.	Activities which demonstrate a strong and complementary intersection between art/culture and other sectors or would inspire new and unique methods and strategies that can be emulated into the applicant's own artistic practices.
Local cultural development	Art and society
Activities which involve aspects of community engagement and would have a positive impact on the arts ecosystem of the applicant and the destination city he/she is visiting. This also includes activities that would benefit periphery cities.	Activities that invoke new, interesting and progressive approaches using the arts to discourse on local and global issues that are relevant to our society. These approaches should contribute to discussing, creating awareness of and finding solutions for key issues of our times.

**Note:** The activity which you are intending to participate in does not need to tackle all four focus areas

# What types of activities are supported?

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ASEF supports the mobility of artists and cultural professionals for participation in the following 6 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

Regardless of the type/format of activity you intend to participate in, the activity should closely fulfil **Mobility First!**'s guiding principles and priorities.

## Grant Coverage

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### What does the Mobility First! grant cover?

The **Mobility First!** grant is intended for covering international travel and visa costs only.

Accommodation and any other costs are excluded from the grant amount.

Does ASEF provide support  
for visa application?

If your application to **Mobility First!** is successful, an official letter of offer will be generated. This letter may then be used as a supporting document to facilitate the visa application process.

Does ASEF provide travel  
insurance?

No. However, to prepare for unforeseeable events such as health issues, security risks, etc, ASEF advises all selected grantees to ensure that they are insured for their travels.

If my cultural mobility  
application is successful, is it  
possible for ASEF to also  
fund the transfer of my  
artworks to the activity I am  
going for?

No, currently we are only able to support the mobility of people.

Can I apply for funding for  
my project? What about  
production costs of my  
artwork/instruments/materials  
which I will require for my  
project?

**Mobility First!** only supports cultural mobility/travel of artists and cultural professionals to enable them to attend the 6 cross-border activity types supported. We are unable to provide funding for production costs for artworks or specific projects like a theatre play, for example.

Can I purchase my flight tickets before the results for each round of Mobility First! open call is announced and get reimbursed for my flight expenses after?

Yes, you may purchase your tickets early if the tickets are available at a cheaper price.

However, do note that ASEF **will not** be held liable if your application has not been successful.

In addition, the actual flight expenses do not determine the grant amount allocated.

ASEF determines the grant amount.

# Timeline

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The mobility call will be open and accepting applications from **Friday, 18 October 2019**.

Applications will be received and accepted by ASEF on a rolling basis and applicants can expect to hear feedback about their application **within 2 weeks** of submission.

With the recent announcement by the World Health Organisation (WHO) labelling the coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic, coupled with the current status of worldwide travel restriction, the health and safety of applicants and grantees of our Mobility First! travel grant is our utmost priority.

Within this framework, we will be extending the travel period for our Mobility First! special open call and all travel for applicants should hence end by **31 December 2020**.

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the Mobility First! team will continue monitoring the situation carefully and we will keep applicants informed should there be changes in the situation.

# Assessment Process

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## How is an application assessed?

Applications will be assessed based on:

- Quality and content of the applicant's purpose of journey and mobility objectives
- Relevance of the proposed activity to one or more of **Mobility First!**'s focus areas of skills transfer/knowledge exchange, innovation in arts and culture, local cultural development and art and society

## 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 via email.

# Application and reporting processes

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1. Applicants should read the **Application Guidelines** before submitting an application.
2. All applicants' travel should be completed by **31 December 2020** and individuals should submit an online application form which will be made available on <https://asiaeuropefoundation.formstack.com/forms/mobilityfirstnorway>.

The following documents must be included with your application:

- Curriculum vitae
  - Invitation letter/supporting documents from activity organisers
3. Applicants can expect to hear feedback about their application within **2 weeks** of submission.
  4. Upon successful application, ASEF will request for a scanned passport copy from each grantee.
  5. For successful grantees, 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)**
  6. 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. 100% of the allocated grant amount will be transferred post-travel and after ASEF receives the necessary documents and the required post event report.

## Questions?

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Drop us an email at [mobilityfirst@asef.org](mailto:mobilityfirst@asef.org)