



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Creative Cities
Network

APPLICANT'S HANDBOOK

2015 Call for applications

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to foster international cooperation with and between cities that have recognized 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 development plans at the local level and actively cooperate at the international level.

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. 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 sector as well as the 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. 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 of 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 need to 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 should prepare and consistently implement an action plan, regularly report on their achievements and participate 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:** Your action plan needs to fit the priorities of your city as well as the UCCN 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 unit 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 primary contact or focal point should be designated within the team for all communications with UNESCO.

Although the application should be led by local public authorities, it must also reflect wide consultation and support across the city and genuinely speak on behalf of public, private and civil society sectors of the city. It is therefore vital to elaborate the application in close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders such as creators, cultural and creative industries professionals, 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 Creative Cities Network involves long-standing 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 the 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-fit-all formula for the preparation of an application, the following graph resumes the main components of this process:



When adapting this proposed sequence for preparing an application to your 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: www.unesco.org/culture/creativecities.
- 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, the experiences, the expertise of the city and build the main lines of the city's action plan.
- The application must be submitted via email to: ccnapplications@unesco.org, with the "subject": Application [name of the candidate city]. This email should include the following attachments:
 - (i) The official 2015 Application Form available on the UCCN's website completed;
 - (ii) A formal letter from the Applicant City's Mayor presenting the candidature;
 - (iii) A formal letter of endorsement of the candidature from the National Commission for UNESCO of the country in which the city is located;

- (iv) Two formal letters of support from active national professional association(s) in the creative field concerned¹;
- (v) Three photos of your city related to the creative field concerned s (JPEG, max. 3MB);
- (vi) 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 recommended 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 applicant to ensure that 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. Non-acceptance of late submissions is an expression of respect for all the applicants who duly respected the deadline.

Filling the Application Form

Applications must be submitted using the official 2015 Application Form available in the UCCN website.

All the sections of the form should 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, and therefore we encourage providing brief answers to each section, including the most relevant information for assessing the cultural and creative assets of the city and the feasibility and opportunity of the proposed action plan by the evaluators.

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

The application should be consistent and be written in clear and fluent English or French, which are the working languages of 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 recommended 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.

¹ For example, if applying to the creative field of Literature, a letter of endorsement from the national writers’ association would fulfil this requirement

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do cities apply?

Cities are invited to apply during the Call for Applications dates announced on the website: www.unesco.org/culture/creativecities. Applications should be submitted by email using the official Application Form. Applications not submitted in this required format will not be considered neither evaluated.

When is the application deadline?

The deadline for applications is announced on the UCCN website (www.unesco.org/culture/creativecities) under the Call for Application page. For the 2015 call for applications, the deadline will be 15 July 2015, 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 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, with the "subject": Application [name of the candidate city]. This email should include the following attachments:

- (i) The official 2015 Application Form available on the UCCN's website completed;
- (ii) A formal letter from the Applicant City's Mayor presenting the candidature;
- (iii) A formal letter of endorsement of the candidature from the National Commission for UNESCO of the country in which the city is located;
- (iv) Two formal letters of support from active national professional association(s) in the creative field concerned²;
- (v) Three photos of your city related to the creative field concerned s (JPEG, max. 3MB);
- (vi) The "Cession of rights and register of photos" form dully filled.

Please contact us at creativecities@unesco.org in case of technical difficulties.

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

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

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 UNESCO specialists and 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 requested to avoid inquiring about the evaluator's identity and doing any sort of lobbying.

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

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

Moreover, UNESCO Secretariat is unable to follow up the application process of the candidate cities neither to give specific orientations and guidance for each case.

Please contact us at 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 arts, 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 into 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's Creative City.

Does the size of a city matter?

Cities or regions need to count at least 100,000 inhabitants to join the Network according to the Designation Procedure of the 2015 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.