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## FUNDING PRINCIPLES

### The *Outer Ear* Funding Programme

#### 1. Goal and purpose of the grant

The independent scenes of current, non-commercially oriented music practices is more varied in Germany than in almost any other country. Whilst the direct route to the audience and the centre of society was rarely sought for many years, the attitude of many musicians towards their audience has changed noticeably over the past ten years. New and unusual venues away from concert halls are being used, new intermedial concert formats are being developed, mediation strategies and co-operations – even together with civil society initiatives – have led to a conceptual opening and a changed awareness of the importance of encounters and dialogue through and about contemporary music. The growing sensitivity to questions of audience development is also reflected in the debate on diversity and inclusion aspects, which are now firmly integrated into the discourse of the experimental music scenes.

The *Outer Ear* funding programme aims to strengthen precisely these approaches. Participatory projects should enable as many interested parties as possible to participate in the creation process of a work and even to help shape it. Instead of focussing on the finished product, the multi-layered processes of making music are placed in the foreground. The playful, experimental and unfinished, as well as doubts and detours, can be heard and experienced in a wide variety of presentation formats. This approach not only creates new access to contemporary music, but also fosters participation and temporary communities.

In times of increasing social polarisation, it is more important than ever to use and strengthen the aesthetic and artistic-technical characteristics of experimental music practices. Current music has the unique potential to awaken and cultivate openness to new and different things, thus strengthening democratic capacity and empathy and generating shared aesthetic experiences that challenge and connect.

The key questions to be investigated in the funded projects of this programme are as follows: How can we come together? How can we arouse interest in others? How can we promote constructive dialogue? How can we listen to each other?

When contemporary music projects consciously facilitate encounters not only among like-minded people or old acquaintances, they challenge us to search for answers to these questions, leave our comfort zones and discover unknown creative possibilities. At the same time, such communicative projects show that innovative contemporary music has social relevance.

GEFÖRDERT VON



Der Beauftragte der Bundesregierung  
für Kultur und Medien

VORSTAND

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MITGLIEDSVERBÄNDE

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Elektroakustische Musik / Deutscher Komponist:innenverband / Deutscher Musikrat /  
Deutscher Tonkünstlerverband / Gesellschaft für Neue Musik / Initiative Musik / Deutsche Jazzunion

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## 2. Subject of the funding

In accordance with No. 1 of these funding principles in conjunction with the general [those](#) of Musikfonds e.V., funding is provided for the implementation of projects by professional musicians who can demonstrate outstanding artistic quality and who can be expected to develop successfully as artists.

In particular, the programme supports projects that extend the usual forms of concert presentation and are designed to appeal to people who have had little contact with experimental music in addition to the regular audience of contemporary music practices and invite them to engage with the music. The programme focuses on projects that dare to break new ground in order to soften the usual market separation between producers and consumers in favour of open dialogue. The aim is to enable a broader perception of and easier participation in current music practices.

Conceivable/possible formats include, for example:

- Musical interventions in public spaces
- Participatory/inclusive projects
- Workshop and meeting formats
- Co-operation projects with civil society or non-profit initiatives

In line with Musikfonds' guidelines, this programme places particular emphasis on social and artistic sustainability. The application must demonstrate how the corresponding sustainability goals should be achieved, implemented and documented. To better realise these objectives, it is recommended to enter into co-operation(s) as part of the project and describe them in the application if necessary. However, co-operation with civil-society or non-profit initiatives is not a formal requirement for submitting an application.

Pure mediation formats that are not designed for the presentation of a work created within the project are excluded.

## 3. Grant recipients

The funding programme is generally aimed at professional musicians in the field of contemporary music as defined in Musikfonds' statutes and funding principles. Natural and legal persons, i.e. artists, musicians, composers, bands or ensembles of all sizes and institutions, are eligible to apply. Musikfonds primarily supports the professional independent music scene. This support does not rule out the involvement of amateurs, but purely amateur music projects are excluded from the application process.

Applicants must have their registered office or place of residence in Germany. International co-operations are possible and desired. Funded projects, however, must be realised with a focus on Germany and have a clearly recognisable connection to musical life in Germany.



The funding programme is open to all professional musicians who meet the application requirements. We welcome applications from musicians with disabilities and/or a migrant background. The funding programme is also aimed at non-academically trained musicians from the DIY sector. Students are generally excluded from submitting an application.

#### **4. Type and scope of the grant, eligible expenditures**

Funding is provided for time-limited projects with a funding amount of 25.000 to a maximum of 50.000 euros.

Funding is provided as one-off project funding and granted as a non-repayable grant in accordance with the provisions of Sections 23 and 44 of the German Federal Budget Code, including the administrative regulations issued in this regard, by means of a grant agreement under private law within the scope of No. 12 of the administrative regulations relating to Section 44 of the German Federal Budget Code.

Funding is generally granted in the form of fixed-amount financing.

It is generally possible to apply for funding for a maximum project period of up to two years. Project can be launched from 1 July 2026.

Eligible expenditure within the scope of project funding include, in particular:

- Artistic fees at an appropriate level (minimum fee per concert of 300 euros)
- Other project-related personnel costs
- Event and production costs
- Travel and accommodation expenses in accordance with the German Federal Travel Expenses Act (BRKG)
- Conception, management/administration, artistic direction, planning and advertising
- The German Artists' Social Security Fund (KSK) and the German Society for Authors' Rights (GEMA)
- Rental costs for rehearsal and performance rooms and technical equipment, transport costs
- Public relations, documentation
- Consultancy services from co-operation partners

Permanent funding, institutional funding and funding for construction measures are excluded. There is no entitlement to funding.

Funding is generally conditional on an appropriate own contribution, which must be recognised as such in the financing of the projects in the amount of at least 10% of the total expenditure. Complementary funds from other public funding bodies (e.g. federal states, local authorities) for the project can be provided as counter-financing. Participation in the financing can also be



provided by own funds and by earmarked grants from third parties (public bodies, foundations, sponsoring, donations). Own funds also include income from ticket sales and participation fees.

## 5. Application procedure

5.1 For the first funding round, applications can be submitted from April 1, 2026, to April 30, 2026 (6:00 p.m. CET). The application phase for the second funding round runs from October 1, 2026, to October 30, 2026 (6:00 p.m. CET).

Applications must be submitted [online](#).

The earliest possible project start date for the first funding round is July 1, 2026 (deadline). The project period will run until June 30, 2028, at the latest. Projects in the second funding round can start on January 1, 2027, at the earliest and run until the end of 2028.

5.2 The following documents are required for the application:

- **Project description:** Description of the artistic concept and the formal structure of the project (max. 2 pages)
- **Presentation** of the planned measures to implement the funding objectives, including the sustainability objectives
- Short **biographies** of the applicant, the musicians and co-operation partners involved
- Current **music samples** of the applicant and any musicians involved
- **Cost and financing plan**

The projects to be funded are selected by an independent expert committee specially convened for this funding programme, which consists of five experts.

The following link provides information on the *Outer Ear* funding programme:

[Förderprogramme | Musikfonds e.V](#)

## 6. Other grant provisions

The projects must not be started before the application has been submitted and until the grant agreement under private law has been concluded. Upon application, exceptions may be authorised in accordance with the regulations on early commencement of measures without prejudice to funding. In principle, the conclusion of a supply and service contract attributable to the execution (e.g. event contract, contracts with musicians, etc.) is to be regarded as the start of the measure.

The projects must always be carried out in Germany.

The general ancillary provisions for grants for German federal project funding ([ANBest-P](#)) become part of the grant agreement. They must be observed from the premature start of the measures.



The applications are examined individually. Grants awarded on the basis of these funding principles do not generally constitute state aid in accordance with the European Commission's notice on the concept of state aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) of 19 July 2016. Accordingly, culture is the bearer of identities, values and meanings that reflect and shape societies in the Union. Certain activities in the field of culture and the preservation of cultural heritage can be carried out in a non-commercial manner and are therefore non-economic in nature. The public financing of such activities does not constitute state aid. In justified individual cases, funding is provided as aid in accordance with Art. 53 of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (General Block Exemption Regulation – GBER; OJ EU L 187 of 26 June 2014, p. 1), last amended by Regulation (EU) 2020/972 of 2 July 2020 (OJ EU L 215 of 7 July 2020, p. 3).

No individual aid may be granted to undertakings or organisations that have not complied with a recovery order based on an earlier decision of the European Commission declaring aid to be unlawful and incompatible with the internal market (Art. 1 No. 4a GBER). Anyone who has not complied with a corresponding order is excluded from funding on the basis of these funding principles.

#### **7. Duration of validity**

These funding principles come into force on the day after their publication and apply until six months after the end of the authorisation period.