

Call for cultural entrepreneurs “Création Africa” South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi

**Issued by the Embassy of France in South Africa, Lesotho and
Malawi and the French Institute of South Africa.**

Deadline: 7 December 2025

Date of Issue: 3 November 2025

For any questions or queries : projectofficer.faec@frenchinstitute.org.za

About Création Africa:

Création Africa is a groundbreaking initiative by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, coordinated by the Embassy of France and the French Institute of South Africa (IFAS). The project aims to boost and support cultural entrepreneurship in South Africa, Lesotho, and Malawi.

Création Africa: South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi is based on a holistic approach that combines mentorship, incubation, training, funding and networking to support cultural entrepreneurs with a focus on entrepreneurs within a growth stage.

Création Africa aims to support a vibrant and sustainable ecosystem for cultural entrepreneurship in Africa by collaborating with local and international incubators and businesses, institutions and partners. Création Africa will operate under the oversight of Team France, ensuring effective governance and strategic guidance.

For this project, a partnership with the South African incubator UVU Africa has been established to implement and oversee both the mentoring phase and the incubation program. With their substantial experience in scaling up startups, they bring valuable expertise to the initiative.

Objectives of Création Africa South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi:

1. **Build a vibrant, sustainable Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI) ecosystem:** Create an enabling environment around cultural entrepreneurs that supports their ongoing success by coordinating incubators, partners, investors and resources across countries.
2. **Stimulate and support cultural entrepreneurship end-to-end:** Back Founders and Cultural Entrepreneurs through growth with incubation, coaching, legal and administrative tools, business planning and mentorship.
3. **Strengthen the CCI in South Africa, Lesotho, Malawi:** Channel targeted capacity-building and market development to grow sector resilience and competitiveness.
4. **Drive scalable impact and job creation:** Select and support ventures that can scale impact and employment while adopting sustainable practices in their businesses.
5. **Prioritise innovation and problem-solving:** Back ventures with distinctive value propositions addressing pressing needs and opportunities in local markets.
6. **Improve market access and business development:** Help entrepreneurs reach customers and distribution, including B2B/B2G links and access to finance and funding opportunities via the Création Africa platform.

7. **Expand international cooperation & mobility:** Connect African founders with European and African peers, partners and markets through forums and immersion programmes.
8. **Foster networking and community:** Operate a pan-African programme to share opportunities, learnings and visibility for entrepreneurs.
9. **Showcase CCI talent and narratives to grow demand:** Use forums, exhibitions, incubation showcases to increase visibility and investor/buyer confidence in the sector.

Phases of the Création Africa South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi Project:

1. *Call for Cultural Entrepreneurs: from 3 November to 7 December 2025*

- Entrepreneurs across the cultural and creative industries (CCI) in South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi are invited to participate in the program by submitting their applications. **See below for full list of criteria.**

2. *Mentorship Program: from 2 February to 20 March*

- The top 50 selected projects will undergo a tailored mentorship program of about 7 weeks to equip entrepreneurs with tools, guidance, and expertise necessary to refine their business models and enhance their business skills.

→ A pitch day is scheduled at the conclusion of the mentorship program to be selected for the second phase: incubation. During this event, you will have the opportunity to present your business/project in front of a jury.

3. *Evaluation jury and Final Selection: End March 2026*

- From the top 50, 15 entrepreneurs will be chosen based on their pitch, their progression through the mentorship program, readiness for incubation, and potential for sustainable growth in the cultural and creative industries.

4. *Incubation Phase: from April to October 2026*

- The 15 finalists will advance to the incubation phase.
- The incubation phase offers comprehensive support, mentorship, resources, and guidance to scale the projects into thriving cultural enterprises.
- Tailored Programs: Each selected project or business will receive customized support depending on its needs, including, access to networks, investors, mentorship, strategic guidance and financial support as a leverage effect to scale up the business.

→ Kindly be informed that a pitch day is scheduled at the conclusion of the incubation program. During this event, you will have the opportunity to present your project in front of a jury and a panel of investors.

5. Grants and Financial Support

- The 15 projects selected will receive financial support from the French Institute of South Africa as a leverage effect to scale up their businesses.
- The amount of the support, from 15 000€ to 30 000€, disbursed will be determined by the incubator and the jury based on the specific needs and potential outlined by the entrepreneurs to scale up.

6. Immersion program in France between October and November 2026

- This initiative is designed to provide comprehensive support and preparation for entrepreneurs gearing up to present their projects to potential investors and key industry players from Africa and Europe. Entrepreneurs will receive tailored guidance, mentorship, and networking opportunities, equipping them with the necessary skills and connections crucial for their project's success and growth in the vibrant and dynamic cultural entrepreneurship landscape.

Who can apply?

The application is open to all entrepreneurs within the Cultural and Creative Industries from South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi.

Applicants must:

- Be over 18 years old.
- Be resident of South Africa, Lesotho or Malawi.
- Business must be managed and/or run by the owner (entrepreneur).
- Business must be an existing business which is registered within South Africa, Lesotho or Malawi.
- The Business must have a demonstrable history and traction and/or provide credible market research that shows viability if proposing a new product or innovation.
- Demonstrate the ability to scale in terms of impact and/or job creation.
- Business must demonstrate innovation and/or unique proposition that address pressing needs or opportunities.
- Participants are required to be available and committed for the full duration of the mentorship and incubation programmes, including taking any necessary time off from their business obligations.
- Be willing to credit the Embassy of France for South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi as well as the French Institute of South Africa and Création Africa in all

marketing and publicity during and after the programme when referring to the programme.

- The applicant must understand and agree that any photos and videos provided and taken throughout the Création Africa may be used on our social media platforms and in future communications. If you have any concerns, please don't hesitate to speak to a member of our team.
- Be willing to actively engage in all stages of the program and participate in all hosted events, such as Pitch day, investors pitch, etc.
- Be in possession of a valid passport or be able to apply for a valid passport.
- Be prepared to travel to any other designated city or country to participate in an event or workshop. As part of this mission, all necessary travel expenses for events, workshops, or any other related activities will be covered.
- You must be available for these dates:
 - Presentation by the shorted applicants to Jury: 19 to 23 January 2026
 - Mentorship program: 2 February to 20 March 2026
 - Pitch sessions: End March 2026
 - Incubation program: April to October 2026
 - Immersion program: Between October and November 2026.

The Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) comprise a wide range of sectors that drive both cultural and economic growth, including but not limited to the following:

1. **Visual and Performing Arts:** Painting, sculpture, photography, and other visual arts; theatre, dance, circus, and live performances.
2. **Music:** Composition, production, performance, and distribution of music.
3. **Film and Television:** Production, direction, distribution, and related audiovisual services.
4. **Design and Craft:** Graphic design, industrial design, and artisanal crafts.
5. **Fashion:** Apparel, accessories, and related industries.
6. **Animation, Gaming, and Interactive Media:** Animation, video games, software, and immersive or interactive experiences.
7. **Digital Media:** Digital content creation, online platforms, and social media production.
8. **Creative and Cultural Promotion Spaces:** Festivals, events, creative hubs, and community spaces that support, present, or promote artists and creative industries.
9. **Publishing:** Books, magazines, newspapers, and other print or digital publications.
10. **Architecture:** Architectural design, urban planning, and related services.
11. **Cultural Heritage:** Museums, archives, preservation, restoration, and heritage management.

To increase your chances of being shortlisted for the Création Africa project, your project should align with the following criteria:

- Creative and Innovative company.
- Have been in existence for at least 2 years.
- Have a potential to generate revenue and be scalable.
- Have attainable and realistic objectives with a clear long-term vision and business model.

Please note: If you were part of the Top 12 of the first edition of Creation Africa, you are not eligible to apply for this iteration.

How to Apply:

Please complete the [following form](#) before the 7 December 2025 at 23:59' SAST.

Should you have any question, please send an email to:

projectofficer.faec@frenchinstitute.org.za

Any incomplete application will be automatically disqualified.

Follow us on Instagram: @franceinsouthafrica

Selection:

All applications will be reviewed by a selection panel comprising staff members from the UVU Africa and the French Institute of South Africa.

A jury panel, consisting of experts from Team France, the public and private sectors in CCI and business development, will be composed to choose the top 50 projects. Each pre-selected candidate will be given an opportunity to present and pitch their project to the jury.

How will you know if you are selected:

- Successful applicants will be notified by no later than the 29 January 2026.
- In the event, that the candidate does not receive any communication from UVU Africa or the French Institute of South Africa after 29 January, it is advised to consider your application as unsuccessful.

--- We wish you all the best ---