

CoSTAR National Lab, in collaboration with MusicFutures

Supported by Music Venue Trust

FAQs: Grass Roots Music Venue Innovation

KEY INFORMATION & LINKS

All details about the [CoSTAR Network](#), the [CoSTAR National Lab](#) and MusicFutures can be found on our website.

Please read the [full downloadable brief](#) before attending the webinar or submitting your application.

We encourage you to reach out if you have any questions not covered in these FAQs and look forward to receiving your application!

Our email address for this funding call is costar.pilots@rhul.ac.uk

GENERAL CALL INQUIRIES

1. What is this call actually asking for? What are you hoping to see?

We want to understand the opportunity new and emerging technologies and cutting-edge research can play in supporting some of the real-world problems experienced by grass roots music venues across the UK. Our goal is to see exciting companies with new ideas come together with venues and artists to access CoSTAR's and MusicFutures' leading technical facilities and researchers, to develop their ideas further, to develop and be able to commercialise IP and then test these ideas on location in front of audiences in 2026.

2. What sorts of companies and organisations are able to apply for this call?

CoSTAR has been designed to support UK business growth across the Creative Industries via access to leading edge technical facilities and research expertise. CoSTAR is an important part of UKRI's R&D strategy for the Creative Industries. Research Organisations, Creative Practitioners and Sole Traders can be included in applications, but the lead applicant must be a UK-based company and demonstrate a high level of ambition to deliver technological advancement and business growth in its application to creative industries challenges.

3. And so, what role do grass roots venue and artists play in this call?

We are asking that although the lead applicant is a UK-based company, that both a grass roots venue and artist are included in each application. We are expecting to see letters of support to that effect. We are also expecting to see in applications that eligible costs will include, venue hire and artist fees and use of freelance staff where necessary and that if you are successful you understand that agreements will need to be put in place around IP and all necessary licences and permits to cover live performance and streaming where appropriate.

4. In my application, can I include more than one venue or artist?

Yes, that is permissible. However, we would caution that the cash costs are fixed and that we are expecting eligible costs to include venue hire and artists fees. And we are asking that each on location pilot is tested at least twice with different audiences.

5. How many projects will you be funding?

We are planning to fund up to 3 projects, 2 will be based and primarily work with the CoSTAR National Lab team at Royal Holloway University in Egham in Surrey (but applications can come from anywhere in the UK) and 1 will be based with the MusicFutures Team inside the Liverpool City Region.

If you are located within the Liverpool City Region please indicate this in your application, and you will be expected to work with the MusicFutures Team. (Further details below).

6. Can I apply from anywhere in the UK or do I have to be based in the same region as the CoSTAR and MusicFutures Facilities?

Companies can apply from anywhere across the UK and, if eligible, there is a travel stipend to cover travel and accommodation expenses. However, one of the three awards will be based inside the Liverpool City Region and the qualifying criteria for this award is that the lead applicant must be a Liverpool City Region based company, working with either a Liverpool City Region based grassroots music venue or Performer. The other two awards can be from companies applying anywhere across the UK.

7. Why is the total value of this project over £140k but the most a company would receive is £40k?

CoSTAR is an infrastructure programme and much of the value is based on access to cutting edge facilities at the lab, and the research specialisms of the teams you will be working with there. The cash value is for eligible costs a company and consortia may incur in order to develop an R&D project with us.

8. Can I ask questions about the sorts of facilities and research support available in order to put my application together?

Yes, we are holding webinars in order to invite questions from potential applicants. The webinars will be on July 22 and August 4. You will hear more about the facilities and the research support available, and you can ask questions. If you cannot attend either of these, we will post them online or you can email us at costar.pilots@rhul.ac.uk

Before emailing, please do attend or watch the webinar recordings as many of your answers may be covered in the webinar.

9. Can we charge for tickets to the pilot tests in order to recoup costs?

Yes, tickets can be sold in order to cover costs (but not for profit). Ticket prices and cost recovery calculations must be agreed with CoSTAR/MusicFutures in advance of the events.

ELIGIBILITY

1. I'm a freelancer - can I apply?

Only if you are a limited company, or if you are part of an application where the lead applicant is a limited company.

2. Can a research organisation apply for this call?

A research organisation can be included as part of an application, but the lead applicant must be a UK registered limited company.

3. Does the applicant company need to have been registered as a UK company for a certain period prior to application?

We are aware that some companies won't have been trading long enough to have submitted any accounts or may have submitted abridged accounts if turnover is not of a sufficient level. This should not prevent you from applying for the programme, as long as your company is registered with Companies House. This has been communicated to the judging panel and will not affect the judging process.

4. Would current projects that are already running be considered for funding or are you looking for new projects to fund?

A current project would have to illustrate the R&D problem that it is looking to address as part of this opportunity. The programme exists to deliver exciting R&D opportunities for companies to work on, it is not project completion funding.

CONTENT & IP:

1. How is data related to the R&D I am proposing in my application treated?

Your data will be managed according to our Data Protection Privacy Policy which can be found [here](#)

2. Who will own the IP of my business or product, is equity taken?

Successful applicants will own any new IP created through their projects. If foreground IP is technical i.e. software, hardware etc., then the IP would be owned by the lead applicant. If the foreground IP generated is creative content i.e. performance, recordings, scores, scripts etc., then the IP would be owned by the artist. Evidence of IP relationships between consortia parties would be requested at contracting stage.

3. If there is 3rd party IP to clear, when would that be done?

If there is a 3rd party IP, the clearing of this for usage will rest with the applying SME/Company. It is the responsibility of the SME/Company to make certain that they have all the necessary rights and permissions in place to work with third party IP if this is requirement for your project.

PRODUCTION & DELIVERY:

1. If our company is successful is there a fixed start date?

There are no fixed dates but please note access to studio time and research support will be scheduled across October, November and December and on-location testing with grass roots venues must complete by February 27, 2026.

2. What is your Inclusion Policy? E.g. Are you able to provide reasonable adjustments and support where needed?

We encourage applicants to let us know about any reasonable adjustments they may require for the application process or their proposed project. You may already know what you would like to request, or you may like to have a general discussion of your options.

CoSTAR also provides Access Support Bursaries, based on a disability, health condition, or access need, to support those making applications to, or participating in, our Industry Access Programmes. For more information on the Access Support Bursaries and how to apply please click [here](#). For any other queries about access needs or reasonable adjustments, please contact costar.pilots@rhul.ac.uk.

APPLICATIONS:

1. Do I have to use Submittable to complete my application?

Yes, we need your application to be entered via Submittable. If for any reason you need support to submit your application this way, please contact us by emailing costar.pilots@rhul.ac.uk

2. What documents are required at the time of application?

The application asks for a high-level project plan and budget, but we do not require detailed schedules or line-item budgets – please respond within the application form.

You also need to submit letters of support from 1) a grass roots music venue and 2) an artist or performer. These can be uploaded via the application portal

You do not need to attach or send any additional documents to your application at this stage. If we require clarification or supporting evidence to your application, we will contact you.

3. How long will the review process of applications take?

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application within 8 weeks of applications closing unless notified otherwise. In the event of very high call volumes, this period may be extended.

4. I want to include more detail than a section in the application form allows, is this permitted?

No, only the information contained within the application form and within page limits specified for each section will be evaluated when selecting proposals. This is to ensure all proposals are scored fairly and equally and helps assessors to more easily compare proposals.

5. Will I be asked to complete an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion form as part of the application process?

Yes, the lead applicant only will be required to answer EDI questions. These responses will not be seen by assessors and will not impact your application in any way. All responses are anonymised and form part of our data collection requirements by our funder only.

6. Can I speak to someone from the team before submitting?

Please ensure you have read the full brief and attend or watch the Webinar recordings. If you still have a specific question, please email us at costar.pilots@rhul.ac.uk with your question and we will put you in touch with the correct person. We cannot provide individual guidance on your application or specific feedback on your ideas in advance of your application.

7. Will I receive feedback on my application if I am unsuccessful?

Due to the sheer number of applications, we apologise, however, we will be unable to provide detailed individual feedback on each application. We will provide overall feedback on what may have been missing across unsuccessful applications for all applicants to consider. Please note there will be many more future opportunities to engage with our CoSTAR Access Programmes and we encourage you to re-apply for subsequent calls if you are unsuccessful in this round.