

INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION HUB

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APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2026
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APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2026

Since 2011, the **United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)** and the **BMW Group**¹ have engaged in a historic partnership geared towards creating a new model for collaboration between the private sector and the UN system.

Today, **UNAOC** and the **BMW Group**, with the support of **Accenture**, are expanding the collaboration and continuing the legacy in selecting innovative projects that encourage intercultural dialogue through the **Intercultural Innovation Hub (IIH)**.

UNAOC and BMW Group, supported by Accenture, mobilize their resources, time and networks to strengthen the selected projects. This model of collaboration between the UN and the private sector creates deeper impact, as all partners provide their respective expertise to ensure the sustainable growth of each project.

Eligible to apply for the Intercultural Innovation Hub are not-for-profit organizations and not-for-profit social enterprises implementing innovative projects focused on promoting intercultural dialogue and fostering diverse and inclusive societies, and who are willing to expand their range of action. Examples include projects in the fields of promoting gender equality, preventing xenophobia, violent extremism, and hate speech, promoting the use of sport, art and culture as tools to drive social change and foster social inclusion, supporting the LGBTQI+ community, advocating for disability inclusion, and using AI and new technologies at the service of humanity. The Intercultural Innovation Hub welcomes projects focused on any of these priorities. IIH does not support one-time events (e.g. festivals, events, conferences. etc.) The funding cannot be used for salaries.

¹ BMW Group US has no participation, financial or otherwise, with UNAOC or the Intercultural Innovation Hub.

THE INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION HUB

The Intercultural Innovation Hub (IIH) will select up to ten recipients.

The main objective of the Intercultural Innovation Hub is to connect, empower and elevate innovative civil society organizations. IIH identifies and supports innovative projects that are already being implemented and have potential for expansion and replication. Selected organizations should implement the project with the overall goal to sustainably expand and adapt to other contexts. Projects presented within this call must have shown successful outcomes during at least its first year of implementation.

Recipients will benefit from a comprehensive one-year programme aimed at strengthening their work and their organizational development. The support programme will consist of funding, training and capacity-building, customized support and mentoring to successfully scale up their projects and strengthen organizations' overall performance and operations. After the one-year support programme, alumni of the IIH will continue benefitting from an alumni network, which gives access to a community of changemakers working in the field of intercultural dialogue, among others.

FUNDING

Recipients will receive funding to be used for project expansion and/or replication of their existing project. The total amount of the funding pool is up to **USD 200,000** distributed evenly between the finalists.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

In order to increase the effectiveness of selected organizations in their work, UNAOC and the BMW Group, supported by Accenture, will develop a comprehensive capacity-building programme tailored to the needs of the recipient organizations. During the programme cycle, recipients will participate in skills development workshops focused on scaling up, leadership, strategy and planning, monitoring and evaluating for results, effective use of social media, etc. Workshops will be facilitated by experts and trainers from the networks of the three partners. Workshops will be both, online and in-person. The online workshops, masterclasses and webinars will be open to all employees of the recipient organizations to enhance organizational development and long-term sustainability.

CUSTOMIZED SUPPORT AND MENTORING

A detailed needs assessment will be conducted with each of the recipients after the Intercultural Innovation Hub's Ceremony. The specific support received will depend on the projects/organizations' individual needs. UNAOC and BMW Group, with the support of Accenture, will then mobilize additional resources to help those organizations achieve their goals. In addition, the Intercultural Innovation Hub's pool of experts will offer project-related assistance and organizational development advice, in order to increase the effectiveness of selected organizations in their work to expand or replicate their project.

RECOGNITION AND VISIBILITY

Selected organizations will be invited to participate in a ceremony celebrating their work.

Moreover, recipients might be invited to participate in regional or global events which can serve as platforms to increase the visibility of their work.

ACCESS TO GLOBAL NETWORK OF CHANGEMAKERS

Alumni will have access to an extensive alumni network which connects previous IIH recipients with each other as well as other civil society organizations and young leaders that work on addressing cross-cultural tensions.

COMMITMENT OF THE RECIPIENT ORGANIZATIONS

To maximize the benefits of the comprehensive capacity-building and mentorship support, the selected organizations are expected to fully commit to the year-long process.



Capacity-building Workshop in Munich, Germany

SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process for the Intercultural Innovation Hub is guided by the principles of fairness, transparency and integrity. The steps outlined are intended to retain the integrity of the process whilst preserving a level of flexibility in the creation of an open and effective competitive procedure.

The selection process is composed of the following steps:

ELIGIBILITY SCREENING

All submissions will be rigorously assessed using the eligibility criteria. Applicants must meet all eligibility criteria outlined below in order to be considered.

SHORTLISTING

Based on the written submissions and accompanying materials, a maximum of 30 applications will be shortlisted by a diverse pre-selection committee composed of the following: one member from UNAOC, one member from the BMW Group, one member from Accenture and a selected number of experts.

Only shortlisted applicants will be notified.

Shortlisted applicants will be required to provide further documentation, including but not limited to the organization's budget, draft budget for the use of funding and work plan (templates to be provided).

SELECTION OF FINALISTS

Up to ten finalists will be selected and applications will be assessed using a comprehensive set of criteria outlined below.

***Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed in the final stage of evaluations.**



MIGUEL ÁNGEL MORATINOS

Under-Secretary-General, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and UN Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia



ILKA HORSTMEIER

Member of the Board of Management of BMW AG
People and Real Estate, Labour Relations Director

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Submitted applications need to fulfill each and every one of the following criteria to be deemed eligible:

ORGANIZATIONS' ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Status

Be registered as a non-for-profit organization such as a non-governmental organization, charitable organization, research and educational institution, labor union, indigenous group, faith-based organization, professional association, foundation and local or municipal branches of government.

Length of operation

Applying organizations must have been operational for a minimum of 2 years before March 2026; with funding base and project implementation (i.e. the organization must show registration as non-profit in their country of operation by March 2024 or earlier).

Field of action

Eligible to apply for the Intercultural Innovation Hub are not-for-profit organizations implementing projects focused on promoting intercultural dialogue and fostering diverse and inclusive societies, and who are willing to expand their range of action. Examples include projects in the fields of promoting gender equality, preventing xenophobia, violent extremism, and hate speech, promoting the use of sport, art and culture as tools to drive social change and foster social inclusion, supporting the LGBTQI+ community, advocating for disability inclusion, and using AI and new technologies at the service of humanity. The Intercultural Innovation Hub welcomes projects focused on any of these priorities. IIH does not support one-time events (e.g. festivals, events, conferences, etc.).

Past UNAOC or BMW Group support

Organizations that have previously received any UNAOC support are **not** eligible to apply to the Intercultural Innovation Hub. These other UNAOC distinctions include, but are not limited to, Living Together Peacefully in a Diverse World Prize, Youth Solidarity Fund, Entrepreneurs for Social Change, Create UNAOC and PEACEApp. Organizations that have previously received a BMW Group award for Intercultural Learning/Commitment are **not** eligible to apply to the Intercultural Innovation Hub.

PROJECTS' ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Sustainability of the project

The Intercultural Innovation Hub does not support one-time events (e.g. festivals, events, conferences, etc.).

Funding

IIH does not provide base funding. It does not fund projects that have not been implemented yet. Projects submitted within this call should have been launched for at least 12 months by March 2026 (i.e. projects submitted must have started in March 2025 or earlier).

Past UNAOC support

Projects that have been submitted to previous editions of the Intercultural Innovation Hub (including the Intercultural Innovation Award) and were not selected are eligible and encouraged to apply again.



Capacity-building Workshop in Cape Town, South Africa

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Shortlisted projects will be evaluated against a comprehensive set of criteria, scoring a maximum of 100 points. Shortlisted organizations will be requested to provide supporting evidence of meeting the criteria below. These criteria include three main categories:

THE ORGANIZATION (30 POINTS)

Organizational structure: is capable of achieving the goals set in the project.

Commitment to a diverse and inclusive society: has proven interest and commitment in fostering diverse and inclusive societies (e.g. past reports, reference letters, etc.).

Work plan and budget: has set a realistic budget to replicate or expand the project.

Transparency: has made genuine and demonstrated efforts to adopt a policy of transparency.

Equality: has adopted equality and diversity policies, as well as safeguarding policies, as reflected in staff members, membership and activities.

THE PROJECT (60 POINTS)

Relevance: is appropriate for the targeted audience and in the local context where implemented, taking into account the necessity of the project, and which SDG it is tackling.

Quality: undertakes an in-depth analysis of problems/issues and sets a consistent intervention strategy.

Clarity: sets clear objectives and draws a logical connection between activities, outputs and outcomes.



Capacity-building Workshop in Munich, Germany



Capacity-building Workshop in Munich, Germany

Innovation: pushes beyond typical approaches and excels in the use of original and novel methods (social media, arts, pedagogical approach, innovative training, etc.).

Measurability: impact of the project is measurable (i.e. number of beneficiaries, polls on attitude change, assessment of behavioral changes, clear policy changes, etc.).

Sustainability: demonstrates ability to be sustainable in the mid-long term.

Replicability: has the capacity to be replicated and scaled-up in different settings. This is a key evaluation criterion.

THE APPLICATION TEXT (10 POINTS)

A total of 10 points will be awarded to applications which demonstrate clarity, conciseness and persuasiveness. The application text must show an effective communication of ideas, provide relevant examples, provide clear and concise responses to questions, and include insightful arguments and engaging narrative.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

CLICK HERE TO APPLY ONLINE: www.interculturalinnovation.org/application-process

Deadline for submissions is April 15, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. EDT (New York City time).

Please visit <https://www.interculturalinnovation.org/application-process/> and follow the instructions to apply. **ONLY** online applications are accepted.

If you have questions about the application process, you can visit the Frequently Asked Questions section of our website on <https://www.interculturalinnovation.org/faq>. If you have additional questions, please contact hub@interculturalinnovation.org.

Only duly completed applications will be considered. Applicants may be requested to supply documentary evidence which supports the statements made above. Failure to do so can result in disqualification.

All personal data provided to UNAOC, the BMW Group and Accenture is kept confidential. By clicking on the "Submit" button, applicants agree to the publication of his/her name, the name of the participating organization, its address and other submitted materials on the [interculturalinnovation.org](https://www.interculturalinnovation.org) website and any media now existing or subsequently developed, for any UNAOC-BMW Group purposes.



Intercultural Innovation Hub Ceremony in Cascais, Portugal



Capacity-building Workshop in Mexico City, Mexico



Capacity-building Workshop in Munich, Germany

DISCLAIMER

UNAOC and the BMW Group reserve the right to not select any applicants or to cancel the next edition of the Intercultural Innovation Hub for any reason. UNAOC and the BMW Group accept no liability for cancelling the next edition of the Intercultural Innovation Hub or for anyone's failure to receive actual notification of cancellation.

TIMELINE

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

APRIL 15, 2026

AT 5:00 P.M. EDT (NEW YORK CITY TIME)

We strongly encourage applicants to apply early, in order to minimize the risk of last-minute applications. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION HUB



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MORE INFO

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CONTACT US

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