

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The International Visitors Programme of the NRW KULTURsekretariat (NRWKS)

1 The International Visitors Programme run by the NRWKS (www.nrw-kultur-international.de) is a networking programme that is dedicated to the idea of physically bringing together cultural operators, their ideas, interests and abilities. The aims of the programme are sustainable cooperation and long-term exchange.

With this challenge in mind, we unite curators, festival organisers, multipliers and specialised journalists from all over the globe with the cultural scene in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). The most important regional and national partners include the state's cultural ministry, the Goethe-Institut, cultural offices as well as – at the local level – North Rhine-Westphalian cities and their cultural institutions.

These visits offer the International Visitors Programme guests an opportunity to learn more about the cultural scene in North Rhine-Westphalia – with particular emphasis on the relevant sectors and interests. Personal conversations enable knowledge and experiences to be exchanged, contacts to be made, networks to be expanded and ideas gathered. In this way the participants gain an insight into the high-calibre und diverse cultural life on the banks of the Rhine, Ruhr and Lippe.

What is the aim of the International Visitors Programme?

The aim is to sponsor artists and cultural operators in NRW and to support their international orientation by means of sustainable networks. Their interest is our interest: developing contacts, maintaining networks and initiating collaborations. Thus the focus of the programme lies in bringing institutions, organisers and expertises together, exchanging and developing know-how, as well as giving North Rhine-Westphalia's cultural institutions an international profile. What's more, journalists from abroad pinpoint North Rhine-Westphalia as a cultural state through targeted reporting and thus improve the state's reputation as such.

Through these trips, the guests of the International Visitors Programme have an opportunity to learn about North Rhine-Westphalia's cultural scene – with particular emphasis on specific sectors and interests. Personal conversations lead to an exchange of know-how and experiences, new connections are formed, networks are extended, and ideas are consolidated. Partners and guests receive information on an ongoing basis through alumni structures, social media activity, and a monthly newsletter

Furthermore, partners who met each other through the International Visitors Programme take priority when it comes to [cooperation and export promotion of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia](#) (Kooperations- und Exportförderung des Landes NRW).

Who can apply for sponsorship from the International Visitors Programme?

Cultural institutions as well as promoters/festival organisers in NRW who wish to be considered for the programme and to create contacts with international participants can apply to the Visitors Programme with their projects/events.

An international guest cannot apply directly, instead a recommendation is required from a partner institution in NRW or abroad (for example, the Goethe-Institut). The International Visitor Programme offers research trips and event trips which are announced twice-yearly, once in spring and once in autumn, through the offices of the Goethe-Institut abroad. The principle of 'targeted invitation' applies by means of a standardised application process using an application form that needs to be filled out by the recommending institution.

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How can I apply for sponsorship from the International Visitors Programme?

As an organiser of festivals, events, exhibitions, conferences or other potential themes you can apply twice a year if you are based in NRW. For events due to take place in the **first half of the year**, the deadline is **15th October** of the previous year, for events in the **second half of the year**, the deadline is **15th April**.

Applications do not require a form and can be sent informally by email. Applications should include a description of the project focussing on the international relevance of the institution's event or programme, information about the organising and contact partners, as well as suggestions of potential visitors. When proposing potential international guests, please use the form which is downloadable from the Visitors Programme website. A separate form is required for each guest and should be filled in with as much detail as possible.

To what extent does the International Visitors Programme sponsor international guests to visit NRW?

The International Visitors Programme covers the travel and accommodation costs of the international guests who come to NRW under the auspices of the Visitors Programme, as well as organising a completely cost-free accompanying programme. Hotel stays are booked and paid for directly by the International Visitors Programme. Hospitality expenses for the guests are covered only for the duration of the programme and will be communicated beforehand in the itinerary. Participants' travel costs are dealt with individually with a limit being established before the trip which will be laid out and sent with the invitation.

Does the International Visitors Programme cover travel expenses for artists, contributors and project partners who already scheduled for projects or events in NRW?

The International Visitors Programme is not a programme for covering travel costs but for networking. Invitations cannot be extended to contributors, artists or project partners who have already been invited.

How does a Visitors Programme proceed?

Trips are offered in different disciplines and generally last two to five days. They can be organised around special events (festivals, cultural events, conferences) or have a specific thematic focus. Only in exceptional circumstances can travel costs for individuals be covered by the International Visitors Programme.

3 The guests are invited on a trip as far in advance as possible. Generally, the guests book their own tickets themselves – travel costs, along with incidental transfer costs, will be settled at the end of the programme. Travel costs can only be paid by bank transfer, not in cash. The hotel rooms are reserved and paid for in advance by the International Visitors Programme. The itinerary as well as the list of participants and their contact details are communicated to the participants before the start of the trip and updated on an ongoing basis.

All visitor groups are looked after by a knowledgeable guide who informs the guests of core details about NRW, the function as well as the potential of the cultural sector, but equally about NRWKS and the Visitors Programme. Each trip begins with a welcome meeting during which the visitors get to know each other and the International Visitors Programme and the NRWKS are introduced. The visits generally finish with a shared farewell lunch or dinner, which also serves as an opportunity to exchange initial feedback about the trip, the appointments and the new contacts.

What are the obligations of the NRW partners and the International Guests?

The partners from NRW promise to use the logo of the international cultural work of the NRWKS on all promotional material in reference to the support through the Visitors Programme. Furthermore, the partners commit to actively contribute to the organising of an additional programme, to be available for meetings and to arrange free entry to buildings and/or events.

The international participants promise to take a full and active part in the complete programme of the visit and at the end to write up their feedback. A form is available to the guests for this purpose, which should be filled out and returned by email within the specified period to the project administration of the International Visitors Programme.

Furthermore, journalists promise to make their reporting fully accessible to the Visitors Programme.