

ON
THE
MOVE

**CULTURAL
MOBILITY
YEARBOOK
2023**



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Executive Summary

In 2022, the cultural mobility field emerged into the 'post-pandemic' era. As it did so, ambitions to reset or reform the cultural field met with reality, and one issue became pervasive in conversations of the future: environment and sustainability. Various interpretations, this catch-all term holds all our efforts to avoid another global breakdown – in ecosystems, the climate, and communities. With environment and sustainability as its framework, this publication looks back on activity in 2022 in order to get a picture of where the international cultural mobility sector stands today, and a sense of where it might be heading next.

For its first section analysing open call opportunities, the main source is data from the On the Move website, which in 2022 listed 609 calls for funded mobility opportunities with 79 countries and territories as destinations. We attempt to chart changes across regions, disciplines and types of mobility in order to

get a broad view of what happened in 2022, with a particular focus on our key theme of environment and sustainability.

The second section of the report contains two articles offering personal perspectives on mobility and the climate crisis. In the first, Selim Ben Safia reflects on the European cultural impulse to 'go local'. What does this mean for a Tunisian dance sector that has few local resources of its own, and what are strategies for sustainable work that don't shut the door to the world? Closing the publication, a second article by Ukhona Ntsali Mlandu sees debates in the cultural sector in the larger framework of global economic systems that perpetuate inequality and asks who is most at risk and why. Within this, Environmental Justice points a way forward as a movement that 'speaks to the many layers of intersecting struggles that need to be considered when thinking through environmental sustainability'.

Key insights

In 2022, Covid-19 had a smaller impact on cross-border mobility. As travel restrictions eased, the share of calls for in-person activities rose from 70.6 % in 2021 to 84.5 % in 2022.

With the return to in-person work, the share of calls involving digital mobility almost halved. In 2021, 29.4 % of all calls involved online/remote or hybrid work. In 2022, this figure was 15.5 %:

- **But the main decline was in calls focused on online or remote work**, which fell from 18.5 % of all calls in 2021 to 6.4 % in 2022. Even activities well-suited to online formats saw a dramatic return to in-person work. In 2021, 41.3 % of calls for training activities were online or remote only; this figure fell to 5.9 % in 2022.

- **Hybrid work held up better.** Calls that involved a mix of online and in-person activity made up 9.1 % of all calls in 2022, only a small decrease from 10.9 % in 2021.

- Digital mobility reduced everywhere, but **Asia retained more online and hybrid activity than other regions**, with the share of hybrid calls even increasing from 9 % in 2021 to 14.5 % in 2022.

In the post-pandemic world, environment and sustainability is a common theme for mobility projects. In 2020, 3.9 % of calls from the On the Move website were labelled as dealing thematically with the environment and sustainability. In 2021, this figure rose to 7.3 %. In 2022, it reached 10.7 %.

However, this activity was concentrated in Europe. In 2022, 93.2 % of environment and sustainability themed calls with organisers in specific countries had at least one organiser based in Europe. 41.4 % involved an organiser in Northern Europe, and more than a quarter had one from a Nordic-Baltic country.

Looking at the 65 environment and sustainability themed calls from 2022, some observations:

- **and sustainability themed calls deemphasise cities as centres of cultural production.** Among the 52 calls that had defined worksites, 20 involved urban sites (38.5 %), 27 rural sites (51.9 %), and 5 both (9.6 %). 27.7 % of calls involved working in response to a particular landscape or natural resource.
- **Environment and sustainability themed calls are more likely to be cross-disciplinary.** 58.1 % of calls were open across disciplines or to interdisciplinary approaches (versus a global share of 38.2 %).
- **Environment and sustainability themed calls are often collaborative and cross-sectoral.** 12.3 % of these calls from 2022 involved collaboration with scientists/researchers, 10.8 % collaboration with local communities, and 3.1 % collaboration with business/industry. A little over 1 in 10 calls were organised by a university or research institute.

- **16.9 % of environment and sustainability themed calls were organised directly by funders,** reflecting a wider shift in institutional priorities. In some cases, changes to funding programmes were backed by a larger pivot in the institution's fundamental mission or long-term planning.

- There is a lot of interest in the topic of environment and sustainability, but **conditions don't always meet ambitions** – particularly regarding transport. Among the 65 environment and sustainability themed calls from 2022, only 2 restricted travel to land/sea while offering additional support (with 1 more making such travel optional).
- Without greater support, choice and responsibility falls on the beneficiary – **and money is likely a deciding factor.** Among the environment and sustainability themed calls which offered a limited grant for travel, the median value was 390 EUR. Around half of calls offered an all-inclusive grant, meaning higher travel costs would cut into fees and production resources.

In the end, the success of a 'green transition' will not be measured only by topical visibility. It will also lie in actual changes to mobility programmes and working practices, and in an increasingly deep awareness of the interconnectedness of climate, communities and social justice.