



Agency for International
Museum Cooperation

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Press Kit

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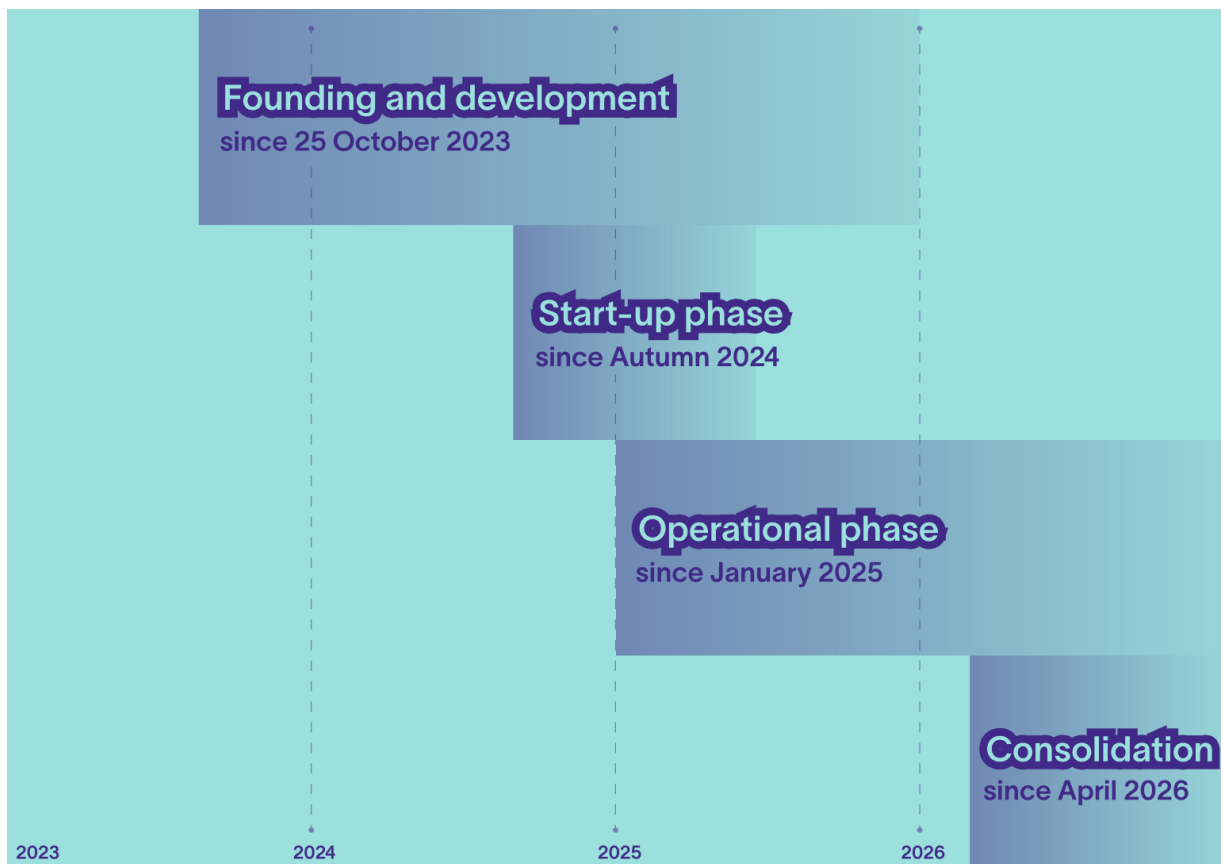
The Agentur für Internationale Museumskooperation gGmbH is a federally owned public enterprise. Its sole shareholder is the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the Federal Foreign Office.
The Agentur für Internationale Museumskooperation gGmbH is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.



Agency for International
Museum Cooperation

The Museum Agency 2023–2026: Turning ideas into practice

Since its founding, the Agency for International Museum Cooperation (museum agency) has built a network of more than 150 German museums and international partner institutions in 17 other countries on five continents. It was established by the German Federal Government on 25 October 2023. Since then, it has been funded by the Federal Foreign Office with the mission to strengthen German museums' international ties and make their work known worldwide.



Germany has an exceptionally diverse museum landscape: more than 7,000 institutions preserve, research, and present cultural heritage and engage with the questions of our time. At the same time, museums face

the challenge of staying fit for the future amid profound social and technological transformation. International partnerships and cooperation projects can help to build lasting synergies within the museum sector. They enable knowledge exchange and mutual learning, open up new perspectives on collections, and give museums and their expertise greater visibility and scope for action internationally. Until three years ago, Germany's museum landscape, shaped by the country's federal system, had no central point of contact pooling experience, expertise, and networks to advise and support museums on cross-border projects.

This is where the idea behind the Agency for International Museum Cooperation comes in. Founded on 25 October 2023 as a non-profit, federally owned limited company (gGmbH), the museum agency moved into its office in the Kantgaragen in Berlin and hired its first staff member in June 2024. In the nearly two and a half years since, it has used pilot projects to test different formats and assess the needs of museums in Germany and internationally, drawing on this work to develop and launch its offerings. During this time, it has also built up its internal office, organisational, and staffing structures. The agency began its operational work in *Services* and *International Programmes* in 2025 and continues to expand both steadily in line with demand.

Today, the museum agency is a fully developed organisation with 13 staff members and well-established day-to-day operations. Since 1 October 2026, it has also been supported by an Academic Committee, which contributes to the further development of its work. The committee brings together recognised experts from the museum and cultural sectors, who will advise once a year on strategic questions, international developments, and future areas of work. The committee will also provide impetus for new projects and collaborations, strengthen the organisation's national and international networks, and contribute to quality assurance for its programmes.

Looking ahead, the museum agency will focus on three areas in particular. First, it will concentrate more closely on supporting specific exhibition and collection collaborations, especially on expanding exhibition tours and loan partnerships in view of rising logistics and transport costs worldwide. Second, it aims to raise the international visibility of Germany's museums and collections more broadly by involving municipal, regional, and state museums outside major metropolitan areas. Third, it will support museums in gradually developing their own revenue models to strengthen their financial position, for example through travelling exhibitions or joint externally funded projects with other institutions. It is also important to secure the structures, experience, and knowledge gained over the first three years for the long term and to build on them, so that cross-border collaborations can have a far-reaching impact even with modest resources.



Three Years of the Museum Agency: Facts and Figures



In demand

In dialogue with more than 150 museums and partner institutions:
47 museums, associations, and organisations from Germany and abroad
have so far used the advisory support offered through the *Services* of the
Agency for International Museum Cooperation (museum agency). 108
institutions have responded to the seven calls for applications issued so

far under its *International Programmes*. The number of applications tripled between the first and second funding rounds.

18 countries on five continents: To date, the museum agency's activities have involved museums and experts from Germany as well as Brazil, Canada, China, Estonia, Japan, Kenya, Namibia, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Sudan, Tanzania, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Zambia.

Connected

21 public events – more than 500 museum professionals reached: Through its 21 public events to date, the museum agency has brought museum professionals together in conversation online and in person. The team has also been invited to numerous events to discuss current developments and needs in cross-border museum work, as well as the importance of international museum cooperation.

A dozen new museum partnerships: The museum agency has helped to initiate international partnerships involving German museums, providing guidance and support along the way. These currently range from planning longer-term collaborations and joint exhibition projects to major international touring exhibitions running over several years.

28 museum professionals on research trips: On research trips to Brazil, China, and Türkiye, 28 museum professionals exchanged ideas with colleagues, got to know other museums, and met potential partners. A trip, to the United Kingdom, will take place in November 2026. Further research trips next year will lead to India, among other places.

Made possible

17 pilot projects: Since 2024, the museum agency has been running pilot projects to test formats and identify needs. The experience gained from these pilots forms the basis for developing its offerings under *Services* and *International Programmes*.

11 funded projects involving 22 museums: In the first funding round of "Engage in dialogues", the museum agency is supporting six international projects by German museums and their partners abroad. Through "Set

anchor points", it is also funding five positions at museums in Germany. In total, 22 museums are taking part in the funding programmes.

13 staff members in the Berlin office: A dedicated team of experts in international museum work gathers knowledge and experience, continually develops the museum agency's offerings, and works to make them a lasting part of the museum sector.



Project Spotlights

The projects the Agency for International Museum Cooperation funds, and the long-term partnerships it builds, show what international museum cooperation can look like in practice. The following examples illustrate the different ways the museum agency works: bringing people together, opening up new perspectives, helping museums tackle specific challenges, and creating space for exchange and for developing ideas together. They also demonstrate what international collaboration can offer museums, their practice, and their role in society.

Partnership with OBMIN, the Ukrainian museum network

Begun in 2024, the partnership with OBMIN was among the museum agency's first international cooperation and is one of its longest-standing activities. It shows how international collaboration can help museums remain operational under exceptional social and political conditions and build lasting networks of mutual support and exchange.

The cooperation centres on questions that reach far beyond individual museum projects: What role can museums play in rebuilding a society? How do they protect collections and cultural heritage in times of war and crisis? And how can they remain places for participation and dialogue at the same time?

OBMIN was founded in Warsaw in 2022 as a platform for supporting and connecting Ukrainian museums. "Obmin" is the Ukrainian word for "exchange". The network now has 156 member museums from all parts of Ukraine. Since 2024, the museum agency has supported the network's activities to bring museum professionals from Ukraine, Germany, Poland, and other countries into dialogue. For example, it helped museum professionals attend the OBMIN conferences in Warsaw in 2024 and 2025. It also helped shape workshops and exchange sessions on topics such as accessibility and inclusion, building social resilience through museum work, and protecting cultural heritage. In 2025, the cooperation expanded to include questions of culture and security through the Ukraine Culture Security Forum, initiated by OBMIN.

Strategic partnerships

Two strategic partnerships bring together complementary expertise and networks, making knowledge and resources available for international exchange at a structural level.

A strategic partnership with ICOM Germany, the German National Committee of the International Council of Museums, aims to make the expertise of German museums even more visible internationally and to strengthen exchange with partners worldwide. ICOM Germany and the museum agency are pooling their knowledge, networks, and experience to create an exchange that benefits museums in Germany and their international partners alike. Plans include joint workshops, networking and discussion events, initiatives to support the next generation of museum professionals, and the sharing of materials and resources through both organisations' channels.

In partnership with the Institut für Museumsforschung (Institute for Museum Research) at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, the museum agency supports the English editions of "Museums: By the Numbers". Published annually, the series presents the results of the comprehensive statistical survey of museums in Germany, with key figures, trends, and analyses in infographic form. The English editions make this data available to international professionals in museum practice, research, and cultural policy, and offer insight into the diversity of Germany's museum sector.

Friedenstein Stiftung Gotha, Germany – Xi'an Qujiang Museum of Fine Arts, China

Friedenstein Palace in Gotha is home to one of Europe's earliest East Asian collections, the China Cabinet of Duke August. However, the histories of many of its objects have yet to be fully researched. In 2026, with funding from the museum agency's "Engage in dialogues" programme, curator Sonja Grulke travelled to China to work with the Xi'an Qujiang Museum of Fine Arts on a closer study of the historical links between the two museums' collections.

Through on-site working sessions, material analysis, and comparison of digital collection data, the partners re-examined porcelain, fans, and gold objects from Gotha, arriving at new identifications and dates. The Chinese colleagues, in turn, identified European influences in their own collection. Examining the objects together in person opened up new perspectives on the history of cultural relations between East Asia and Europe.

The cooperation shows how closely local collection history is intertwined with global connections. It also strengthens professional exchange and long-term collaboration between the two museums. The highlight comes in November 2026, when the Friedenstein Stiftung Gotha (Friedenstein Foundation Gotha) and the Xi'an Qujiang Museum of Fine Arts present a jointly developed exhibition of selected objects from the Gotha collection in Xi'an.

Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung: "Set anchor points" Position for International Relations

Through its "Set anchor points" programme, the museum agency funds positions for international development at institutions of recognised excellence and significant international potential. The aim is to support these institutions in their initial steps toward strategically and permanently establishing cross-border cooperations. Among other initiatives, it supports the global networking efforts of the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung (Bauhaus Archive / Museum for Design), by funding the position of "Curator of International Relations: Bauhaus Art Schools".

The Bauhaus was international from the very beginning. Between 1919 and 1933, faculty and students from many countries worked and experimented at the School of Design. Under pressure from the National Socialists, the Bauhaus was forced to disband in 1933; many of its members were compelled to leave Germany. They continued to develop their ideas and approaches under changed social conditions and incorporated the Bauhaus's ideas into the teaching and design practices of their new institutions. This gave rise to international connections that endure to this day.

Against this backdrop, the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung is using "Bauhaus Art Schools" to explore which schools are educating the next generation of visionaries today and what impulses these institutions are providing for shaping our future. This international program of discourse and exchange, for which the new position carries primary responsibility, expands the Bauhaus-Archiv's network of collaborations by establishing new institutional partnerships and think tanks in the fields of art, design and architecture. Together, they seek to renegotiate key questions of teaching, research and design considering the ecological, social, political and technological challenges of our time. Through international exchange, the "Bauhaus Art Schools" programme connects the Bauhaus's intellectual heritage with contemporary issues, examining how its approaches to thinking and action can be activated, critically reassessed, and further developed today.

Revisiting shared history(ies). Museums in dialogue

Four Munich museums are working with Istanbul Modern: the Sammlung Moderne Kunst (Modern Art Collection) at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Museum Brandhorst, the Münchner Stadtmuseum (Munich City Museum), and the Museum Fünf Kontinente (Museum of Five Continents). Together they are exploring the historical and cultural ties between Bavaria and the Ottoman Empire, as well as present-day Türkiye. These ties are also reflected in the collections and exhibition histories of the participating museums. The cooperation grew out of the research trip “Expanding Audience Engagement and Dialogue in Contemporary Art between Germany and Türkiye”, which Istanbul Modern organised in November 2025 together with the museum agency and the German Consulate General in Istanbul.

In autumn 2026, the partners are bringing museum professionals, artists, and researchers from Germany and Türkiye together for a multi-day workshop in Munich. A public panel discussion will share the workshop’s findings with a wider audience. The focus is on the shared histories of both countries and the question of how contemporary art can make them visible and retell them. In this way, the project directly builds on the themes of the research trip: audience engagement and dialogue in contemporary art. The aim is to reflect on institutional practices, develop fresh methodological ideas, and build existing relationships into a lasting network between Turkish and German institutions.

Funding this event reflects the museum agency’s approach of helping museums build long-term international partnerships, share knowledge, and address even complex questions of cultural history through open and trusting dialogue. The results of the workshop will be documented and shared to inform further discussion in the field.



FAQ on the Museum Agency

What is the purpose of the Agency for International Museum Cooperation?

International cooperation offers ways to address current challenges in the museum sector. Cross-border partnerships can make museums more visible and better equipped for the future. However, such partnerships can also bring obstacles of their own.

This is where the Agency for International Museum Cooperation (museum agency) comes in. Funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, it is a central point of contact for international museum cooperation and fosters exchange between German museums and their partners worldwide. To do this, the museum agency connects and supports museum professionals who are interested in international projects or already collaborating with partners abroad. It finds tailored solutions – from developing an idea together to sharing expertise and putting projects into practice.

Who is the museum agency for?

The museum agency works with German and international museums, and with museum professionals who want to build cross-border collaborations. Other organisations and individuals working on international cooperation in the museum field are also welcome to contact the museum agency with their questions and draw on its support.

What does the museum agency do?

The museum agency's free services and international programmes focus on exhibition projects, museum services, dialogue and networking, and museum infrastructure. It also supports and designs professional development activities and creates opportunities for museum professionals around the world to meet and share their knowledge. This includes taking part in and hosting workshops, conferences, and other forums for exchange.

Can I apply for funding through the museum agency?

Yes. You can find the museum agency's current funding programmes for international museum cooperation, along with information on how to apply, in the *International Programmes* section of its website.

Are the museum agency's services free of charge?

Yes, the museum agency's services are free of charge. After an initial consultation, the team works with you to find and develop solutions tailored to your project. This could be a workshop for your team, for example, or hands-on support for an exhibition project.

When was the museum agency established?

The Agency for International Museum Cooperation was formally founded by the German Federal Government on 25 October 2023 as a non-profit, federally owned limited company (gGmbH). From mid-2024, the museum agency built up its team and infrastructure and used pilot projects to lay the foundations for the services it offers today. Since June 2025, the museum agency has offered its services to museum professionals and continues to develop them. Since autumn 2025, regular calls for applications have been issued under three international programmes: "Set anchor points", "Engage in dialogues", and "Open perspectives". In summer 2026, a fourth programme, "Find constellations", was added to support international exhibition collaborations involving German collections.

How is the museum agency organised?

The museum agency's sole shareholder is the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the German Federal Foreign Office. Its Supervisory Board is made up of representatives of the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, the Federal Ministry of Finance, and Germany's federal states. Since 1 October 2026, an Academic Committee has been advising and supporting the museum agency in its work.



Services

With its range of free services, the Agency for International Museum Cooperation supports international museum projects as a partner at every stage. Its services are aimed at museums in Germany and around the world, as well as other organisations and individuals involved in international collaboration in the museum sector. The services fall into five fields in which the museum agency develops tailored offerings for museums and their international partnerships: international networking, strategic advice, project guidance, implementation, and the sharing of professional expertise.

It's about global connections – finding the right partners and building long-term relationships.

The museum agency brings museums around the world together to build long-term partnerships and develop concrete projects. Its network works in both directions: drawing on its expertise in the international museum landscape, the museum agency finds suitable partner museums in Germany and helps initiate and support cross-border projects. These may include joint or touring exhibitions, or knowledge partnerships involving targeted professional exchange.

This advisory and networking service is aimed at German and international partners.

It's the kick-off – refining visions and clarifying the conditions for success, from initial project outlines to a roadmap.

In the early phase of international projects, the museum agency connects museum professionals with experts in museum and cultural management who help them sharpen their visions in workshops. Together, the partners define the strategic, conceptual, and organisational foundations of the project. This process includes preparing project outlines, analysing the overall conditions, opportunities, and challenges, and addressing questions of funding, intercultural aspects, communication, and legal and customs requirements.

This advisory service is aimed at museums in Germany.

It's your process – supporting processes and structures to help projects move forward efficiently.

International projects often extend over several years. The museum agency provides ongoing support through experts in museum and cultural management who help align project content and organisational structures with changing conditions, improve working and decision-making processes, and strengthen communication and collaboration among all participants.

This advisory service is aimed at museums in Germany.

It's taken care of – taking on tasks in complex international projects so museums can focus on their content.

For selected international projects, the museum agency takes on planning and organisational tasks tailored to each project's needs and specific context. This gives museum professionals more room to focus on the content of their work.

This service is aimed at museums in Germany.

It's your next level – sharing knowledge that advances international collaboration.

Together with experts in museum and cultural management, the museum agency is planning to develop training opportunities to strengthen skills in international collaboration. Key topics include project management for international initiatives, customs and legal regulations in the cultural sector, funding strategies and opportunities, and intercultural communication and collaboration.

For more information about the museum agency's Services, visit:
www.museumsagentur.de/en/offers#services



International Programmes

Under its *International Programmes*, the Agency for International Museum Cooperation regularly invites museum professionals to apply to four funding programmes. Through the programmes “Open perspectives”, “Engage in dialogues”, “Set anchor points”, and “Find constellations”, the museum agency supports the development of strategic museum partnerships, cross-border dialogue and networking formats, information and research trips, and the mobility of collection objects from German institutions in international exhibition projects.

With these funding programmes, the museum agency builds on its core mission of strengthening exchange between museums in Germany and their partners worldwide. The programmes help museum professionals develop and realise joint projects across borders, learn from one another, share knowledge, and address relevant topics through international collaboration. The *International Programmes* aim to foster long-term cooperation and highlight German museums as active participants in the global cultural dialogue.

Open perspectives

The “Open perspectives” programme facilitates entry into international cooperation through information and research trips. It offers museum directors, curators, and institutional representatives opportunities to meet potential partner institutions, exchange ideas about ways of working, and identify shared fields of interest. Research trips bring together museum professionals from German and international museums around specific regional or thematic focuses, offering insights into different museum concepts, collection strategies, and approaches to education and interpretation. At the same time, they create space to share experiences in areas such as audience engagement and inclusion, to establish and deepen networks, and to lay the groundwork for sustainable, long-term cooperation.

Engage in dialogues

Through “Engage in dialogues”, the museum agency funds exchange formats that address current questions in museum practice and help build and expand international partnerships. The programme particularly supports workshops, working meetings, and training sessions – in person, online, or in hybrid formats – that bring together different perspectives on museum practice, reflect on existing approaches, test new forms of collaboration, and raise museums’ profiles in international discourse. With this programme, the museum agency helps build networks that endure beyond individual projects. Depending on the call, museums of all types, exhibition venues with or without their own collections, and memorial sites in Germany can apply together with their partner institutions worldwide.

Set anchor points

Through “Set anchor points”, the museum agency funds positions dedicated to international development in museums – for example, staff positions in international partnerships, development, or exhibitions. Acting as a link between museum management and partner institutions, these positions support international projects across departments. In practice, they advance key themes of international museum work such as access to collections, curating, communication, and the mobility of cultural assets, while involving partner organisations in exhibitions, research, and education. The programme is directed at museums and exhibition venues with their own collections in Germany that demonstrate professional excellence and a strong public profile. These institutions are strategically expanding their international collaborations and can already point to distinctive cross-border activities. They regard international collaboration as an essential part of their organisational development and wish to integrate it actively into their administrative and operational structures.

Find constellations

At its heart, the “Find constellations” programme aims to open up museum collections for shared use across borders. Museums use their collections to tell stories about cultures, societies, and historical contexts. “Find constellations” supports partnerships that seek to explore and expand these stories through international exchange, allowing them to be read in new ways. Setting collections in motion, linking them to global discourses, and forging new connections all depend on one crucial prerequisite: the responsible movement of objects. The museum agency therefore funds transport and logistics costs associated with packing, shipping, customs,

insurance, restoration, and conservation. In this way, the “Find constellations” programme supports the shared use and contemporary presentation of collection holdings beyond Germany.

Further information about the funding programmes is available here:
<https://museumsagentur.de/en/offers#international-programmes>