

Practical tools for

Creative Climate Action

Capacity Builder for Creative Climate Collaboration



30-60 min

Tool description and purpose

This guide helps local authorities work more confidently and effectively with artists in public-sector, sustainability- or citizen-focused projects. It supports you in:

- Choosing the right commissioning model (grant or procurement)
- Designing artist-friendly and goal-oriented open calls
- Building clear, fair and transparent contracts
- Creating better outcomes through mutual understanding

Who is it for?

- Local authorities such as municipal officers and regional cultural producers
- Project leads and coordinators managing artist collaborations
- Intermediaries working with public sector and creatives
- Anyone planning to commission or contract creative work with public funding

When to use this tool?

- While designing an open call, residency, or commissioned creative project
- When preparing a procurement or grant-based collaboration
- Before signing contracts with artists or creative teams
- In early planning meetings or stakeholder workshops
- When developing internal guidelines for creative collaboration

How to use this tool?

Step 1: Read through the tips

- Familiarize yourself with each thematic section:
- Purpose and outcomes
- Legal format (grant vs. procurement)
- Designing calls
- Roles and expectations
- Contracts and rights
- Risk, structure, and support
- Sharing and celebrating the results
- These are based on real-life experiences from cities and regions across the Baltic Sea region (Kotka, Skåne, Jurmala - read more from the case studies).

Step 2: Reflect on your own context

- Which tips are most relevant to your current or upcoming project?
- What aspects do you already cover? Where is there room for improvement?
- Use this tool as a planning checklist or discussion prompt with your team.

Step 3: Use examples to support your design

- Refer to real-world examples (e.g. Region Skåne's open-ended call on energy saving)
- Draw inspiration for writing better tender texts or call criteria
- Learn from tested practices on topics like IPR, citizen engagement, or payment models

Step 4: Share with others

- Use the tool in cross-departmental meetings (e.g. culture + climate + procurement)
- Share with artists or intermediaries early in the process
- Integrate selected sections into call documents or internal guides

Creative Procurement Guide for Local Authorities

Tip List

Practical Tips for Local Authorities Procuring or Commissioning Creative Projects with Artists and Cultural Professionals.

1. Clarify the Strategic Purpose First

- What change do you aim to support (e.g. sustainability, behavioural shift, community engagement)?
- Elaborate why a collaboration with the artists or creatives makes sense, e.g. what these professional can bring in to the wanted change.
- Articulate this in terms that invite creativity rather than prescribing a ready solution or product.

2. Choose the Right Mechanism: Grant or Procurement?

- Grant if the goal is cultural value or experimentation.
- Procurement if you're buying a specific service or deliverable.
- If unsure, test a hybrid model (e.g. open call with negotiated scope).
- Seek guidance from legal or intermediary partners when needed.

3. Design the Call for Creativity, Not Compliance

- Use questions, not instructions in open calls:
- “How might creative processes foster mindset shifts in our community?”
- Avoid overly rigid language or bureaucratic formats – allow space for surprise.
- Collaborate with intermediaries and artists in shaping the criteria and tone of voice to be appealing and convey the opportunity.

Example from practice: Region Skåne

“We asked artists to respond to the challenge: how can cultural creatives work with energy saving? The call included open-ended questions, not specific instructions, to invite diverse approaches – for example, working with new materials, behavioural change, or participatory processes with civil society.”

– based on Region Skåne's open call model

4. Discuss Roles and Expectations Early

- Make sure everyone knows who does what:
- Who coordinates?
- Who communicates?
- Who supports documentation and visibility?
- Avoid “hidden labour” – if participation in meetings or public events is expected, plan and budget for it.

5. Respect Artistic Freedom – Define It Together

- Clearly state what outcomes are expected without limiting the creative process.
- Trust the artist's method – but align it with the public purpose.
- Artistic freedom must coexist with contract responsibilities.

6. Handle Contracts with Care and Clarity

- Use a written agreement that includes:
- Scope of work
- Timeline and milestones
- Payment schedule (e.g. 70/30 split)
- Documentation and communication expectations
- IPR terms (usage rights, visibility, crediting)
- Consider three-party contracts if an intermediary is involved.
- Be mindful of the power dynamics and ensure fair contract and terms for the creative party.

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next page

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7. Understand Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

- By default (e.g. in Sweden, Finland), the artist retains ownership.
- If you need usage rights, define scope, purpose, and duration in the contract.
- Never assume “full ownership” unless explicitly negotiated.
- Ask for guidance from the intermediary party, public art agencies or creative umbrella associations with knowledge about creative rights.

8. Use Intermediaries as Bridge Builders

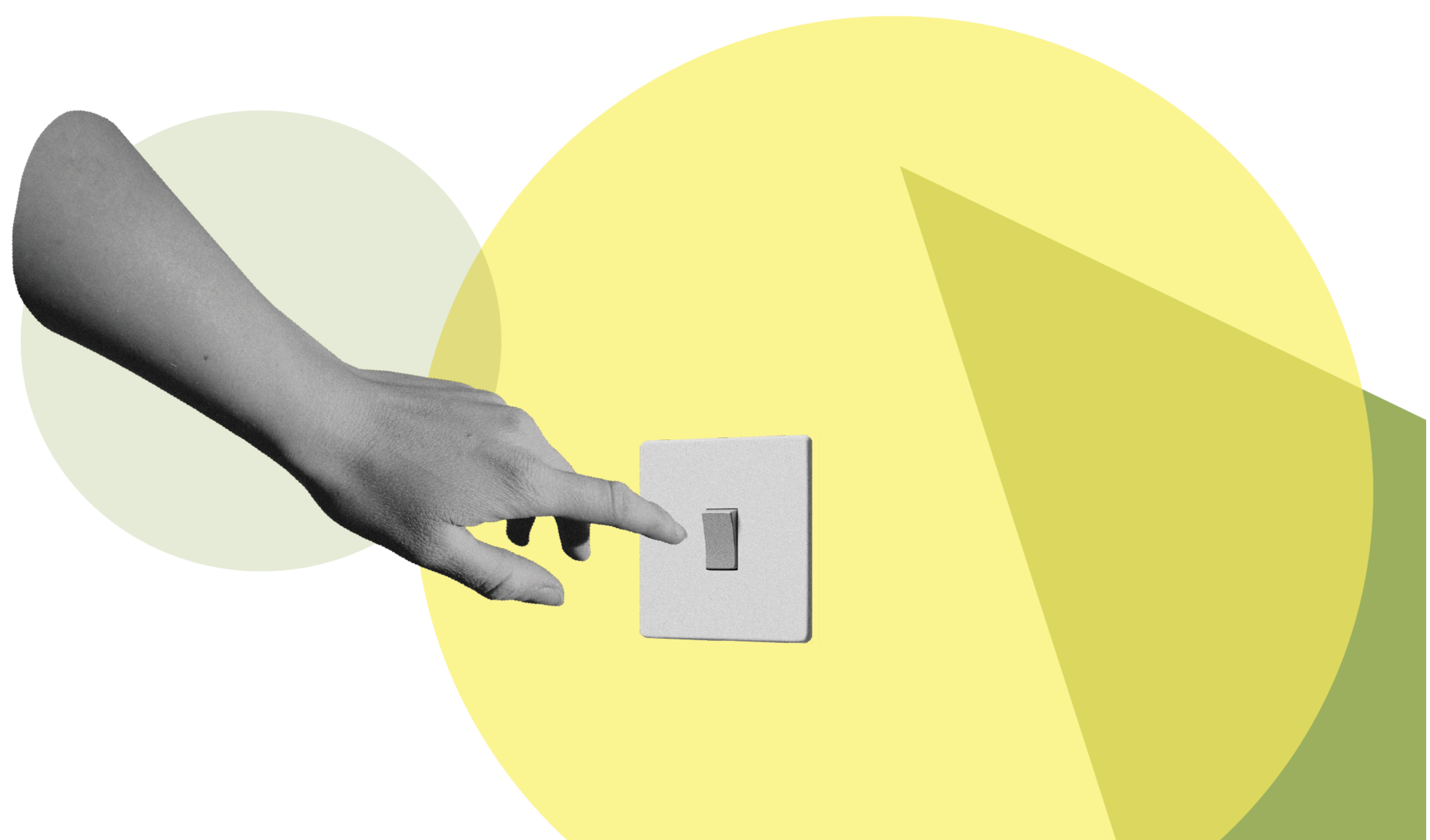
- If possible, partner with intermediaries (e.g. cultural hubs, agencies) to:
- Facilitate the process
- Support artists
- Translate between sectors
- Balance the expectations to ensure smoother delivery.

9. Start Small – Learn and Iterate

- Pilot creative collaborations in low-risk formats before scaling.
- Evaluate not just the outcomes, but also process quality, expanded networks and partnerships.
- Gather feedback from diverse stakeholders in the collaboration: artists and creatives, communities, internal departments and other stakeholders.

10. Celebrate and Share

- Ensure proper public visibility for the creative work – both artist and project deserve recognition.
- Use documentation (photos, video, stories) to share outcomes with involved communities, citizens, and peers.
- Build learning into your cultural procurement practice.



Page 2