

IQLAA, ACCELERATOR OF CULTURAL BUSINESSES CALL FOR APPLICATIONS — 1ST EDITION

1. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Iqlaa is an **acceleration programme for Moroccan cultural and creative businesses led by young entrepreneurs** (18-35 years). It aims to support the growth of these businesses and help them scale up, in order to boost their social and economic impact.

Funded by the European Union (EU), this project is implemented by **Africalia, Fondation Hiba and Institut français**. It is part of the **partnership between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco** to support the development of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in Morocco.

The programme will run over 3 editions, until the end of 2029. For this first edition, **Iqlaa will support around twenty young CCI entrepreneurs** in developing their activities and implementing their growth project, through a **specific support scheme** and **tailored financial support**.

The programme will offer a **three-stage pathway** - Onboarding, Strengthening and Impulse - designed to support CCI businesses at every stage of their growth. The first two phases will focus on consolidating the business model, while the third will facilitate scaling up, through investment and export readiness. In addition, the awarding of seed and growth grants will support the companies' growth and help them flourish within the Moroccan cultural and creative ecosystem.

The programme targets Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) businesses, which cover the following sub-sectors:

- Animation, video games and multimedia
- Crafts and creative arts
- Performing arts
- Visual arts
- Broadcasting and distribution (TV, radio, platforms)
- Film and Audiovisual
- Events and Festivals
- Books and Publishing
- Fashion and Design
- Music and the Music Industry
- Heritage, Cultural Tourism, Architecture, Gastronomy
- Press and Media
- Advertising and Marketing

2. - OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The objective of this call for applications is to identify the CCI companies (approximately 20) that will join the first edition of the Iqlaa acceleration programme.

Selected businesses will follow the first two phases of the programme (Onboarding and Strengthening), leading to initial funding in the form of a seed grant (30,000 to 50,000 dirhams). They will also benefit from intensive preparation to refine their growth project and prepare to pitch before a panel of experts. Successful companies will then join the Impulse phase and benefit from enhanced support, an immersive trip to Europe, and a growth grant of up to 450,000 dirhams.

This call for applications offers:

- Targeted training
- Business coaching
- Peer-to-peer meetings
- Networking with the Moroccan cultural and creative ecosystem
- Funding to implement your growth project

3. IQLAA SUPPORT

Joining the Iqlaa accelerator means benefiting from tailor-made support, adapted to the needs of businesses in the cultural and creative sectors, combining collective and individual approaches, to support businesses at every stage of their acceleration. This is why the programme offers a progressive approach through **three successive pathways**: Onboarding, Strengthening and Impulse.

- 1- **Onboarding** (2 months): A very short phase to assess individual needs and define an action plan with cultural entrepreneurship experts. The phase ends with a bootcamp (5 days) to refine strategy, test ideas and meet the other entrepreneurs. Following the bootcamp, each participant is invited to submit a complete project proposal (action plan and budget) in order to be awarded the seed grant.
- 2- **Strengthening** (3 months): A phase combining one-on-one coaching and group training to consolidate the business model, address key topics (intellectual property and copyright, digital marketing, accounting management, etc.) and prepare for the pitch sessions, a decisive step to access the Impulse stage and obtain the growth grant.
- 3- **Impulse** (5 months): An intensive phase focused on trainings specific to acceleration, such as investment readiness, export readiness, as well as digitalisation and monetisation. In parallel, financial mentoring on one hand and creative mentoring on the other will provide tailor-made support. Finally, the cohort will benefit from an immersive trip to Europe to meet the European CCI ecosystem. This trip (6 days, including travel) will take place in autumn-winter 2027-28.

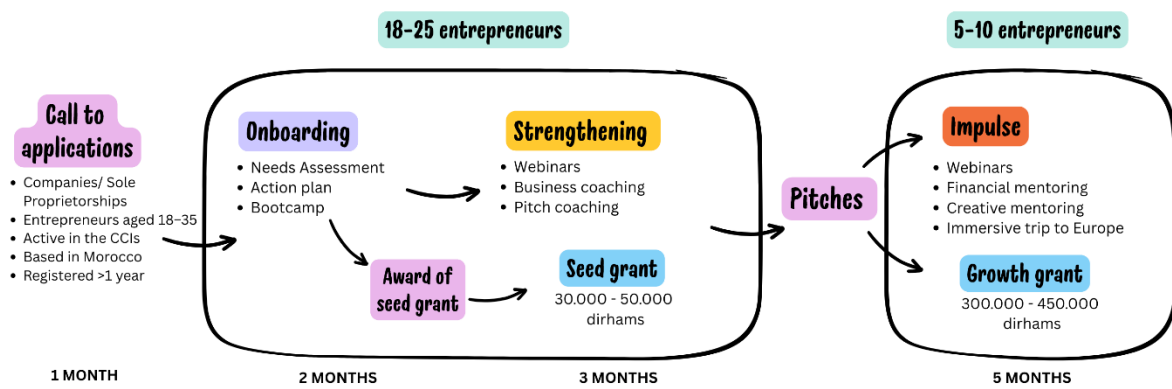
4. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

In addition to providing support, Iqlaa also aims to foster the growth of CCI companies through the awarding of two grants: a seed grant and a growth grant.

- **Seed grant** (between 30,000 and 50,000 dirhams): Following the Onboarding phase, entrepreneurs may be awarded a seed grant to finance part of their growth project. **All companies selected under this call for applications are eligible to receive this seed grant** provided they demonstrate consistent participation throughout the programme.
- **Growth grant** (between 300,000 and 450,000 dirhams): Following the pitch sessions, only the winning companies will receive a growth grant to cover the implementation of their growth project.

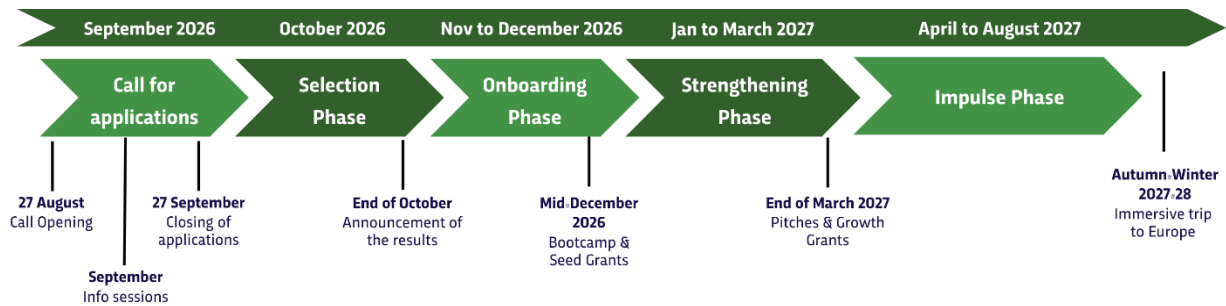
Beyond technical and financial support, Iqlaa also offers **genuine networking opportunities**, both in Morocco and internationally: participation in CCI forums, meetings with the local ecosystem, site visits (to companies, incubators, cultural spaces, etc.), and immersive trips to Europe

Here is a summary of the Iqlaa accelerator:



5. TIMELINE 1ST EDITION

- 27 August - 27 September 2026: Submission of applications
- October 2026: Review of applications and selection of winners
- November - December 2026: Onboarding phase
- Mid-December 2026: Bootcamp & Award of seed grants
- January - March 2027: Strengthening phase
- March 2027: Pitch & Selection for the next phase and award of growth grants
- April 2027 - August 2027: Impulse phase
- Autumn-Winter 2027/28 (exact date to be confirmed): Immersive trip to Europe (6 days, including travel)



6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible, candidates must meet the following conditions:

- ✓ Be a private legal entity (SARL, SA, or sole proprietorship), legally registered with the competent national authorities and have legal status
- ✓ Have legally existed for at least 1 year (at the time of application, by 27 September 2026 at the latest)
- ✓ Be a cultural and/or creative organisation, active in one of the CCI sectors as defined by the Fédération des Industries Culturelles et Créatives (FICC)
- ✓ Be based in Morocco (both the company and the referent person are based in Morocco)
- ✓ Be led by an entrepreneur aged between 18 and 35 who is fluent in either French or Darija
- ✓ Have completed the application form and provided all the requested documents
- ✓ Be available to take part in the programme for its entire duration

The following are not eligible:

- ✗ Associations and non-profit organisations
- ✗ Public or semi-public organisations (state-owned enterprises, government agencies, public schools, etc.)

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection is based both on the profile of the business and the entrepreneur representing it, as well as on the proposed growth project.

Criterion	Elements assessed	Points
1- Relevance of the company and its offer	Clarity of the problem addressed, relevance of the solution, cultural or creative added value, innovative approach	5
2- Maturity and management capacity of the business	Experience, stage of development, proven results; Governance and role structure; Management resources and equipment	5

3- Experience of the entrepreneur and its team	Profile of the entrepreneur, technical expertise, complementary skills	5
4- Understanding of the market and strategic positioning	Knowledge of the target audience, competition, international recognition, differentiation, strategic positioning of the business in relation to the market/ecosystem	5
5- Strength of the business model	Clear and viable revenue model, pricing strategy, distribution channels; level and progression of turnover and profit in previous years, sources of funding already secured	5
6- Growth project and potential for scaling up	Consistency, realism and sustainability of the proposed project and growth potential of the organisation in relation to the proposed project, capacity for development, scalability of the model, and impact	5
7- Coherence and efficiency of the budget	Consistency between the proposed budget and the needs expressed, between planned expenditures and proposed activities, and cost-effectiveness ratio	5
8- Motivation and alignment with the Iqlaa Accelerator	Growth needs expressed, strategic vision, commitment, ability to capitalise on the program	5
BONUS - Social, regional, and responsible contribution	Regional Development, Youth, Gender Equality, Environment, Digital Technology/Innovation	+2

8. SELECTION PROCESS

Selection will take place in four steps:

- Step 1: Eligibility check of applications (based on the eligibility criteria)
- Step 2: Evaluation by jury members (based on the selection criteria)
- Step 3: Central Committee meeting to aggregate jury scores and decide on the final selection
- Step 4: Announcement of the 18-25 selected candidates

The jury involves members of the consortium (Africalia, Fondation Hiba, Institut français) and Moroccan cultural representatives, all experts in the cultural and creative industries and experienced in supporting creative businesses.

9. APPLICATION PROCESS

To submit your application, please fill out the [online registration form](#) and attach the following 7 annexes:

1-Presentation of the organisation, 2-Project budget, 3-Registration documents, 4-Letter of commitment, 5-Resume, 6-ID/Proof of identity, 7-Bank account information.

- **Annex 1: Presentation of the organisation**

A brief document presenting your organisation, with photos and/or links to promotional videos if possible. Format: max 2 pages (PDF, PPT, etc.)

- **Annex 2: Growth project budget**

This is the budget for the project for which you are applying to the Iqlaa accelerator. This is the project that will be financed, in whole or in part, if you are selected. Iqlaa can finance your project within the following range: **300,000 MAD minimum - 450,000 MAD maximum**. If your project has a higher budget, you must be able to finance the portion not covered by Iqlaa, given that Iqlaa's contribution cannot exceed 450,000 MAD.

Activities that may be included in this project include development of new products/services, marketing and communication activities, acquisition of materials and equipment, digital and technological innovation, capacity development, access to new markets, legal and tax support.

Format: Excel (use the template provided [here](#)¹).

- **Annex 3: Registration documents and statutes**

Copy of the official publication of the statutes and registration documents of the applicant organisation. Format: All documents scanned into a single PDF file.

- **Annex 4: Letter of commitment**

Letter of commitment in which the applicant commits to participating in all activities of the Iqlaa programme. It has to be signed by the applicant to this call. Format: PDF (use the template provided [here](#)²).

- **Annex 5: Resume of the applicant.** Format: Maximum 2 pages, in PDF.

- **Annex 6: Identity document of the applicant:** Copy of the passport or identity card. It must be valid. Formats: JPG or PDF.

- **Annex 7: Proof of bank account of the applicant organisation:** Bank account statement (RIB) or bank certificate. Formats: JPG or PDF.

¹ For annexes 2 (budget) and 4 (letter of commitment), please use the template provided with this call. No template other than those provided will be accepted and may result in your application being deemed ineligible.

² Same.

10. INFORMATION & CONTACT

- **Key dates for the call for applications**
 - 27 August: Opening of applications
 - 9 September: Online info session
 - 9-26 September: In-person info sessions
 - 27 September, 11:59 pm: Closing of applications
- **Information sessions**
 - **Online info session** (bilingual FR/AR, answers in EN possible): Wednesday 9 September at 12:00 pm (local time). Register for the session: <https://cutt.ly/QyglBjk7>
 - **In-person info session** (bilingual FR/AR) – dates and venues to be announced
- **How to apply?**
 - Via the online form: <https://cutt.ly/ayglCpT5>
 - By email at iqlaa@fondationhiba.ma by submitting your complete application (form + supporting documents)
- **Have a question?** Come to one of the information sessions or send us an email at iqlaa@fondationhiba.ma. Questions received will be compiled into an FAQ published on the Fondation Hiba website.

Iqlaa is a project funded by the European Union and implemented by an international consortium (Africalia, Fondation Hiba, Institut français). The views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them.