

## ART OF DARKNESS - CALL FOR FOLLOWER AND REPLICATOR CITIES

**Open Call: 15 October 2025 – 30 January 2026**

Art of Darkness is a European project that explores the value of darkness in cultural heritage. We aim to preserve and enhance heritage sites across Europe by promoting a deeper understanding of the cultural, aesthetic, and ecological dimensions of well-designed darkness. Architectural lighting and light art in the lap of darkness can create a new kind of experience and reveal shared meanings and stories of a place and community.

Rather than treating darkness as a void to be filled with light, this project invites you to reimagine nightscapes as spaces of cultural meaning, sensory richness, and ecological balance. By raising awareness of the importance of well-designed darkness, Art of Darkness positions it as a resource for human and environmental wellbeing, cultural innovation, and strategic investment in cultural heritage and the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI). Our project embraces the values of the [New European Bauhaus](#): sustainability, beauty, and inclusion. Launched by the European Commission in 2020, this initiative aims to shape a green transition by rethinking how we live and build in Europe. It seeks to bridge science, technology, art, and culture to create spaces and experiences that are environmentally responsible, aesthetically enriching, and socially accessible.

### Join the movement and spread the impact

Art of Darkness is developing and testing five artistic pilot trials at cultural heritage sites across five European countries. These pilots explore how darkness-sensitive design can create meaningful, beautiful, inclusive and sustainable experiences in public space after dark.

We are now inviting **follower and replicator cities** to join the project and help us **adapt and expand** these approaches across Europe.

By joining the initiative, you will contribute to broader change and become a pioneer in incorporating a thoughtful balance of light and darkness into cultural heritage and urban design.



Is your city rethinking its nightscape and exploring sustainable urban lighting?

Interested in how the balance between light and darkness can enhance the experience of cultural heritage?

Want to learn about co-design and developing profound dark time experiences?

→ You can be part of this



### Who should apply?

- Municipalities located in Europe
- Private developers may apply if supported by a municipality

## Why apply

We're looking for cities that want to:

- Create sustainable, well-balanced nightscapes
- Enhance the value of cultural heritage through darkness-sensitive lighting design and light art
- Learn from artistic pilots and co-design processes
- Exchange knowledge with experts and peers across Europe

As a **follower or replicator city**, you'll gain access to project results, design strategies, and expert knowledge — while contributing to a growing European movement shaping the future of night-time urban and cultural environments.

### **Follower cities** (maximum 10)

As a follower city, you will engage in a 2-year journey exploring the potential of well-designed darkness. You'll gain insights into co-design methods, artistic approaches, and design strategies to shape meaningful night-time experiences in heritage settings.

#### You will:

- Attend the General Assembly in person (mid-June 2026, Bologna, Italy)
- Join two online meetings per year with the follower and replicator city group
- Participate in educational and capacity-building sessions on topics such as lighting for cultural heritage, urban lighting design, co-design methodology for community-oriented dark-time experiences.
- Access the project's digital platform, where all project materials and documentation are shared
- Help raise awareness locally about the value of well-balanced darkness

### **Replicator cities** (maximum 3)

As a replicator city, you will not only follow the project and help share its outcomes, but you will also develop your own pilot site using the Art of Darkness approach.

#### You will:

- Test and apply the Art of Darkness Piloting Model in your own local context
- Receive tailored support from the project's research team
- Present your outcomes at the project's final conference

## How to apply

Submit your application between **15 October 2025 and 30 January 2026 (midnight CET)**.

Each applicant must provide:

1. The completed online application form in English (see Annex).
2. Optional supporting materials (PDF, JPG, or video links with English summaries)

The application form can be downloaded digitally via the project news website:

<https://artofdarkness.eu/call-for-followers-and-replicators/>

All applications must be submitted digitally via e-mail to: [jasmine.vanderpol@luciassociation.org](mailto:jasmine.vanderpol@luciassociation.org)

## Assessment and selection

Applications will be reviewed by a panel from LUCI Association, University of Bologna, and University of Oulu.

For follower cities, the selection is based on:

- Motivation and commitment
- Capacity and experience

For replicator cities the selection is based on:

- Motivation and commitment
- Capacity and experience
- Thematic relevance of your city's cultural heritage for the Art of Darkness project
- Coherence with the NEB values
- Network of local partners
- Implementation capacity
- Own funding

We also aim to ensure geographic diversity across the selected cities.

There will be a maximum of 10 cities selected. Please indicate in your application if you would like to be considered as a follower and/or a replicator city and explain your motivation.

Additional follower cities may be accepted without financial support for travel, but will still benefit from access to the network, platform, and activities.

## Results

Selected applicants will be awarded the official title of: *Art of Darkness Follower City* or *Art of Darkness Replicator City*.

Results will be published on the project website after approval by the Art of Darkness consortium. All applicants will be notified of the outcome by email

## ANNEX

# Application Form



ART OF DARKNESS

Followers and Replicator Cities

All fields marked with \* are mandatory.

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### Part I: General information

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#### Contact information

Please provide contact details for the official city representative signing the application form. You can also specify further contact information for other contacts with whom we will communicate through the projects' duration.

#### City Representative\*:

First name\*: .....

Last name\*: .....

Job position\*: .....

City/Organisation\*: .....

Email address\*: .....

Postal address\*: .....

Phone\*: .....

Date\*

Signature\*

### Other main contact person:

First name: .....

Last name: .....

Job position: .....

City/Organisation:.....

Email address: .....

Postal address: .....

Phone:.....

### **City information\*:**

Name of city\*:

Country\*:

Name of current Mayor or municipal leader\*:

Website and social media (if available):

**Name of local partners to be involved:**

*NB: please fill in where relevant, add if required, describe each role very briefly.*

Stakeholders/persons involved and their roles (private investors, local communities, citizen organisations, researchers, associations, non-profits organisation, artists, institutions, etc.):

## Part II: Application

- Art of Darkness Follower City
  - participate in network activities and access Art of Darkness knowledge.
- Art of Darkness Replicator City
  - develop a pilot project based on Art of Darkness methodologies and themes.
- Open to both roles, depending on availability.

### **– All applicants**

## 1.1 Motivation

Please describe why you apply and how your local context connects to the project's themes (darkness, light, cultural heritage, [New European Bauhaus](#) values). What would you like to learn and how do you imagine contributing? Would you consider implementing co-design methods and tools in your community and if yes why and how? Please identify your target community or audience. (150 words)

## 1.2 Capacity and experience

Please describe the capacity and experience in your city that can be considered as relevant to the Art of Darkness project. (150 words)

- Provide examples of previous projects or initiatives.
- Describe your organisational capacity to participate in the meetings and activities.

## - Replicator applicants only

### 1.3 Cultural heritage site

Please describe the cultural heritage site(s) you wish to consider. Please attach visual documentation (photos, drawings, maps, etc.) if available. (150 words)

- Characterise the site or context (location, physical description, ownership/legal access).
- What are the main issues you would address or potentials you would exploit in relation to Art of Darkness topics and approach?
- What technical infrastructure (lighting, sound, projection, etc.) is available or planned in the selected area?
- Are there any known constraints or permissions needed?

## 1.4 Community engagement strategy

Please describe your ambitions for community engagement activities. (150 words)

- Do you already have local stakeholders (see description p6) in mind?
- How would you involve these local stakeholders?
- What methods do you use already for co-design, participation, or knowledge exchange?
- Are you interested in collaborating with the Art of Darkness team on communication strategies (e.g. storytelling, visibility, shared content, social media, or press)?

## 1.5 Funding

Please describe the availability of financial resources for the pilot project. If possible, identify potential sources such as municipal funds, cultural grants, partnerships, or in-kind support.

## 1.6 Timeline

The Replicator activities span from January 2026 till December 2027. The Art of Darkness methodology proposes the following phases for the replicator process: context mapping, co-design, as well

as possible prototyping / pilot production and evaluation. The selected replicants are expected to present their work-in-progress during the final conference scheduled in the last quarter of 2027 in Montpellier, France. Please provide a rough timeline of phases for your city:

## 1.7 Risks and challenges

Are there any foreseeable risks, challenges or dependencies?