

START Programme: Supporting the emergence of live music associations in Europe



live-dma.eu

What is START?

START Programme, led by Live DMA, aims at supporting the creation and development of live music associations in countries or regions where the sector is underrepresented or lacks structured advocacy or sectorial cooperation. It provides tailored guidance through mentorship and networking to help emerging organisations to become impactful.

Who is it for?

START is designed for individuals aiming at creating new live music associations to represent venues, clubs, and/or festivals but need structural support to formalize or increase their influence.

Expected number of participants: between 5 and 10

How does it work?

Selected participants will:

- Work in pair with one of the Live DMA members.
- Access tools, resources, and contacts to help define their mission, governance, and advocacy goals.
- Participate in peer-learning sessions and strategic workshops.
- Benefit from visibility and integration into the wider Live DMA network.

What are the benefits?

- Gain a clearer understanding of how to structure a professional association.
- Learn from existing national/regional models and avoid common pitfalls.
- Build capacity in policy advocacy, funding access, and sector representation.
- Lay the groundwork to join the Live DMA network and participate in future EU-funded initiatives.

Why it matters?

The START Programme ensures that all regions in Europe have strong, organized representation for the live music sector. By empowering new associations, we foster a stronger live music ecosystem across the continent.

Timeline

September – 30 November 2025

Call for mentees (limited to 10 selected participants)

November 2025 – January 2026

Call for mentors

March 2026 – September 2027

START PROGRAMME

- Online launch
- Possibility to meet besides Live DMA annual meetings 2026 and 2027
- Possibility to have one on-site visit
- Online sessions

Examples of online sessions, based on the participants' needs:

1. Mapping the live music ecosystem

- Identifying local stakeholders, venues, cultural hubs
- Understanding the needs and gaps in your community
- What to do in times of funding cuts, policy shifts, or local threats

2. Building membership and community support

- Recruiting venues, clubs, and festivals
- Offering value and services to members
- Creating inclusive and representative networks

3. How to structure a live music association

- Legal frameworks, governance models, internal roles
- Decision-making processes and member engagement
- Funding and Financial Sustainability : accessing public funding, membership fees, partnerships, and fundraising strategies

4. Advocacy and policy influence

- Defining a clear mission and messaging
- How to speak to policymakers and local authorities
- Case studies from successful campaigns across Europe



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Call for applications

Mentees – START Programme (Live DMA) supporting the emergence of live music associations in Europe



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Are you working to create or strengthen an association that represents live music venues, clubs, or festivals in your country or region? Are you looking for guidance, peer support, and strategic insights to move forward?

The START Programme, led by Live DMA, is here to support you! We are looking for individuals who are part of emerging organisations or informal collectives, ready to take the next step in structuring and growing their association.

What is START?

START is a mentorship programme designed to help new or emerging live music associations to develop governance structures, advocacy strategies, and operational activities. Through peer learning, exchanges, and access to resources, you'll gain the tools and confidence to represent your local music scene more effectively.

What does the programme offer?

- Tailored mentorship from Live DMA members
- Knowledge-sharing sessions on governance and advocacy
- Opportunity to participate and highlight your ideas and experience as well as represent your local music scene in a broader European live music network

Who can apply?

We welcome applications from:

- Individuals that are committed to build a representative structure
- From emerging associations or informal networks working in the live music field
- Located in Creative Europe countries with a priority given to regions underrepresented in Live DMA (Central and Eastern Europe, Balkans, Mediterranean countries, Baltics)

Timeline

Call opens: September 2025

Deadline to apply: November 30th, 2025

Mentoring period: March 2026 – September 2027

How to apply

[Fill out the application form here](#) and tell us:

- Who you are and what stage your organisation is at
- What your goals are and what support you are looking for
- How you plan to use this opportunity

Need help?

[Contact the Live DMA coordination team](#) if you have any questions or if you need help preparing your application.

Join the START Programme and build the foundation of your association with the support of a strong European network!



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