RTDI Call Out 2023: Application

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## Why choose rural touring?

Rural touring describes professional performances which take place in rural venues. These rural venues usually take the form of a Village Hall or Community Centre, but can also be pubs, libraries and outdoors. They are rarely fully equipped arts venues. Performances are programmed by a rural touring scheme, who will curate a varied season of events. Instead of all the events taking place in a couple of rooms in one building, they take place in lots of venues across a specific geographical area, sometimes whole counties, sometimes even further. Rural touring work is very different from touring to city centres or venues in urban areas. Artists express high regard for rural touring venues and the level of professionalism from the promoters. They often talk about their appreciation of a certain “magic” and warmth of the audiences that happens at rural events which aren’t the same at larger halls or festivals. Please see the NRTF website for more information about [rural touring](https://www.ruraltouring.org/).

17.6% of the population of England live in a rural area, as defined by the Defra & ONS classification (which includes rural towns & fringes). Many of these people find it harder to access cultural activities than those in urban centres, but RTDI has shown that this doesn’t mean there is less demand.

Our evaluation of the first six years of the project has shown that the main reason audiences attend RTDI events is because they want to see dance. The second most common reason is that they want to see something different. The audiences for RTDI have come away inspired – 88% say they want to see more dance.

RTDI exists to respond to this demand – to make connections between brilliant dance artists and their work, and rural programmes and audiences.

Artists touring through RTDI have found it to be a rewarding, enriching experience:

“RTDI is incredibly special... it is a wonderful way to tour dance to new audiences who appreciate the work in a genuine and unreserved way. What is the point in touring dance only for dance people? Rural touring opens up a new world of audiences and we are incredibly grateful and overwhelmed to have been offered this experience.”

“Thank you again for giving us the experience of rural touring for such a long time. It really did change the way we thought about touring and audiences in such a positive way, and I think will forever change the way we want to tour moving forwards. We have treasured our time on the country roads.”

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## FAQs about what we’re looking for:

### What sort of dance are we looking for?

We welcome applications that cover all styles of dance and forms of contemporary performance which address a range of ideas and issues. If you define your work as dance, or movement led, then we are interested to hear from you.

We are looking for performances which are suitable for a range of ages, and communicate their ideas clearly with people who might not often have the opportunity to experience dance. We are interested in shows which bring a community together and offer them a ‘good night out’.

We are looking for work which engages audiences in different ways. A way of doing this might be in the form of workshops, post-show events and wraparound activity to augment a performance.

We are looking for work which is technically suitable for rural touring. Rural venues are diverse, and there is no ‘one size fits all’. However, there are some guidelines you should bear in mind:

1. The majority of venues you will visit are not fully equipped theatres. Lighting and sound equipment is often very limited, and many companies tour their own lights.  It is advisable to plan for touring your own technical kit . Most venues will not have sprung floors, or dance floors. It is unlikely you will have technical support at each venue/village hall.
2. Your show should be adaptable to different stage sizes and layouts. The majority of performance spaces are 5mx5m, though this varies. Due to the size of most village halls, it is likely you will be physically close to the audience. You can stipulate a bigger area but this will reduce the amount of potential bookings.
3. You should be acutely aware of sightlines. Most village halls do not have raked seating and therefore an audience cannot see pieces which contain a lot of floor work.
4. Promoters usually expect an interval during the evening. This is something to bear in mind.
5. Most companies who tour rurally usually have no more than 4 people on the road to keep costs down.
6. You should consider your get-in time. Lengthy get in times are costly for promoters who hire spaces by the hour. We would recommend a get in of no longer than 4 hours.
7. Flexibility is key. Your show should be robust and adaptable to different spaces.
8. Please be aware that the majority of venues will not be accessible by public transport

We have small bursaries available (the average size of bursary will be £2,000) which companies selected for the menu can apply for to adapt a show to be suitable for rural touring. For example, your show might have 5 dancers at present, but you think you could remake it for 3 dancers. Or, you have a complex set, but you think you could reduce it.

### What length/duration should shows be?

We are looking for programmes which are no less than 60 minutes in length. If you are applying with a show that is 60 minutes in duration or just under, we will also need an indication of further wraparound activity you could provide in order to occupy a full evening programme (for example, a post show discussion, or participation element).

### Can I apply with a double bill, which would make a full evening of activity?

Yes, you can. Though you should consider the cost implication and also the practicalities of providing two shorter shows. Your get in time and also the fees would need to be the same as with touring one full length show.

### What should the fee I quote include?

You will be asked in the application form for an indication of the fee you require per performance. There will be an opportunity to revise this later, but it is helpful if you can be as accurate as possible at this stage. It should include:

* all fees for company members
* royalties and usage fees of licence fees due
* travel
* per diems for the touring company
* production costs.
* One night of accommodation per show. Any additional nights accommodation required due to travel or days off etc, will be covered by RTDI.

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### Can I apply with a show for children?

Yes. We expect that at least one show that we select will be suitable for children and families.

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### Can I apply with a show in development?

No. Your show should be made and have premiered. If you have a show in creation which is close to being finished and premiered we may consider it. Please include as much information as possible about the show in the application form, along with detailed film footage of the show in its entirety. Pieces that are clearly in research and development or early stages will not be considered.  On the application form, there is the opportunity for you to list performance dates if you have any public performances of your show this year and next year.

### What do you mean by ‘wraparound activity’?

Rural Touring audiences expect to come out for a full evening i.e minimum of 60 mins performance plus an interval and additional wrap around activity e.g. a raffle or a post show talk. As dance performances tend to be shorter we are encouraging companies to think of appropriate and creative wraparound activities to elongate an evening. It might be a good idea to think of a few  options and village hall promoters can then select which activity might work best in their space and with their audience/community. You can be as creative as you like when considering what wraparound activity you might like to offer alongside your show. On previous menus there have been companies offering a post-show Q and A session, a raffle or a ceilidh, and also the chance for audience members to come up on stage to play with costumes or props from the show.

In the application form, we ask you to think about what wraparound activity you could offer and costs of delivering this alongside your show, but these ideas need not be fully formed yet. If selected for the project, we would work with you to think through what wraparound activities you could present.

### Can I apply with an installation, or a piece which has a non-traditional performance format (e.g. outdoor or promenade)?

Yes, though you should keep the guidelines above in mind. Touring periods will be September-November 2024 and March-June 2025. You are asked to submit work that will be able to tour in both autumn and spring.

### What are the requirements for an online work?

We aim to include a performance that encompasses digital media and online work into the menu. This is to recognize that more dance artists are making work to be experienced online, and that presenting dance in digital formats can remove some barriers to access and open new possibilities for touring.

We welcome a range of responses to this invitation. There is no required length or format of delivery for the work. Applicants should bear in the mind that the work should be accessible to those who may not often watch dance live or online. We are not looking for films of live performances; the work should be created and structured to be experienced digitally.

If you are selected for the menu with an online work depending on the format of how it will be shared you may not be required to attend the lab, but you may if you wish, and you will be paid a fee if you attend.

Please note if your work is shared and posted online we expect this would be featured from September 24 to June 25 so you should only apply if your agreements with copyright holders in the work will allow this.

### What if I have no experience of rural touring?

That’s fine. As long as you’re interested in the challenges and opportunities rural touring offers, then we warmly invite you to apply. All artists are required to join a residential Practical Introduction to Rural Touring for Dance LAB to help you with everything you need to know

### What if I have lots of experience of rural touring?

You are also warmly invited to apply.

### Do I have to be available to attend the Practical Introduction to Rural Touring for Dance LAB?

Yes, this LAB is compulsory. If you are applying as a company, you should send one representative. They should be a lead artist, producer or key contact within the company. Please keep the dates free in your diary if you are applying.

### Will I be paid to attend the LAB?

Yes, selected artists will be paid a fee of £400 to attend the LAB. Travel, accommodation and meals will also be covered.

### Can a company offer workshops?

Yes we have money in our budget to help schemes and promoters pay for any workshops you can offer particularly for young people. These workshops are predominately for audience development purposes so workshops scheduled in weeks leading up to performances and not on the day of performances are particularly helpful in this regard if this works geographically.

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### Who is responsible for making my budget balance?

That is you/your company/ your producer. We can offer guidance and look at budgets and have specific rural touring budget templates we can share but ultimately the responsibility of making the finances work lies with you. RTDI is an Arts Council England funded project so if you are thinking of applying to Arts Council for project funding then be aware you can’t apply for helping towards touring costs of shows promoted via RTDI. Some companies often combine touring to other venues alongside any rural dates and apply for funds towards those dates that are not part of RTDI to help make a tour viable.