

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



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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

Mentors – START Programme (Live DMA) Support the next generation of live music associations in Europe



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Are you part of a national or regional live music association within the Live DMA network? Do you have experience in building or managing an organisation that supports venues, clubs, or festivals? Would you like to share your journey, lessons learned, and practical insights to support emerging live music associations across Europe?

If yes, we invite you to become a mentor in the START Programme, part of the Live Style Europe III initiative!

What is START?

START aims to support the creation and structuring of live music associations in countries or regions where such representation is still developing. Through a mentorship-based approach, START offers guidance, resources, and connections to help emerging associations grow sustainably and effectively.

What does mentoring involve?

As a mentor, you will:

- Accompany a new or emerging association over a defined period
- Share your experience and answer questions related to governance, advocacy, funding, and community building
- Encourage reflection, not provide prescriptive answers – mentoring is about supporting, listening, and helping others find their own path, not telling them what to do

Mentoring can happen via online meetings, email exchanges, and (if feasible) in-person visits during Live DMA events or peer-learning sessions.

What's in it for you?

- The chance to give back and contribute to a stronger, more unified European live music sector
- Inspiration and fresh perspectives from people shaping new initiatives
- For ex-staff, an opportunity to remain engaged in Live DMA network
- A meaningful opportunity to shape the future of live music in Europe

Who can be a mentor?

We're looking for (current or past) staff or representatives of Live DMA member associations with:

- First-hand experience in developing, managing, or advising a live music association
- A collaborative mindset and the willingness to support others with empathy and openness
- Availability to follow one mentoring relationship between March 2026 and September 2027 (18 months), with regular contacts (approx. once per month)



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