

Call for tenders for the renovation of Ciné Lumière main cinema (Modernisation and refurbishment)



1. Name & Address

Institut français du Royaume-Uni / French Institute – Ciné Lumière

17 Queensberry Place, South Kensington
SW7 2DT, London
Ph : +44 (0)20 7871 3515



2. Interlocutors

Anissia Morel, Cultural Counsellor and Director of the French Institute;

Raïssa Lahcine, Audiovisual Attaché and Deputy Director;

Guillaume Langlois, Secretary-General;

Ludovic Rose, Deputy Secretary-General;

Eric Trometer, Technical Manager;

Diane Gabrysiak, Head of Programming and Exhibition of Ciné Lumière.

3. Calendar

Publication: March 25^h 2026

Contact: raïssa.lahcine@institut-francais.org.uk

Deadline for submitting offers: April 24th 2026 at midnight.

Offers (detailed proposal, quote + VAT, timeline for delivery, etc.) must arrive before the above date in a sealed envelope, addressed to:

**French Institute
17 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DT**

With the mention:

“Notice of public call for competition for establishing the bill of specifications for the refurbishment and modernisation of the main auditorium / screening room of the French Institute in London”

Study of applications by the selection committee on April 27th.

Choice of successful candidate: April 27th

Signature of contract and start of work in April 28th.



4. Tender evaluation criteria

Review of bids and selection based on the best-value offer

5. Description of the French Institute and the Ciné Lumière

The French Institute in London – a vibrant cultural venue in the heart of South Kensington, and its cinema, Ciné Lumière – one of the best art-house cinemas in London

Part of a worldwide network, the French Institute promotes French language and culture and encourages cross-cultural collaborations. Founded in 1910, and based in South Kensington in London, it comprises a Language Centre, a Cultural Centre, a two-screen cinema, Ciné Lumière, and a multi-media library, La Médiathèque.

The French Institute establishes privileged partnerships with UK's most renowned cultural institutions to build programs and diversify audiences, with cross marketing campaigns, i.e. : museums (British Museum, V&A, NHM, Royal Academy of Art ...), cinema (British Film Institute, National Film and Theater School), fashion and design (Design Museum, St Martin's School), Universities (Cambridge, Oxford, King's College, Imperial College).

The French Institute is a member of Discover South Kensington, an initiative of Exhibition Road Cultural Group (among other members: Royal Albert Hall, V&A, Imperial College, NHM, Science Museum, Serpentine Galleries, the Design Museum, Goethe-Institut, etc.).

The Institut Français is 85% self-financing, 15% remaining are public support (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and it benefits from the support of the TRUST "Friends of the Institut Français" to finance restoration and development work.

The Cultural Centre

The Cultural Centre is situated in a Grade II listed Neo Art Deco building, inaugurated in 1939. It welcomes over 100,000 people each year, thanks to its wide range of events, from film screenings, debates and festivals to concerts and workshops. It has also developed a broad offer for young audiences through public and school activities. Its audiences are mainly British

The Ciné Lumière



The cinema activity is the engine of the Cultural Centre in terms of number of spectators (more than 60% of all visitors) and revenues.

Ciné Lumière has two screens – Ciné Lumière 1 (225 seats), lastly refurbished in 2008 and reopened by Catherine Deneuve in 2009, and Ciné Lumière 2 (34 seats), inaugurated in 2019.

Ciné Lumière offers **2000 screenings / 400 films a year**, among them **100 premieres**, and special screenings followed by Q&A sessions, with an emphasis on French, European and world cinema. It has a **4K digital cinema and 35mm projectors**. It has established itself as **one of London's best art-house cinemas**: *London's Best Cinemas* (Time Out, Oct 2017), *12 Chic Cinemas in London* (Vogue, Feb 2018), etc.

The Ciné Lumière programs every year more than 10 highly successful international film festivals (French, Spanish, Austrian, Polish, Georgian, Arabic, Indian, Korean, ...) to promote cultural diversity. Many European cultural centres based in London rely on Ciné Lumière to give the best experience to their artists and communities.

The auditorium offers not only film screenings, but also concerts, conferences, workshops and artistic performances and is therefore a highly polyvalent space.

The audiences are very diverse in terms of origin and age. British visitors account for 53%, followed by international visitors (17%), and French or Franco-British. 46% of the audiences are less than 35 years old, while the age range of 36-55 represents 20%, and the 56+ are 32%. Women represent 62% of the total audience. Partnering with 100 British schools, the institute attracts around 7000 pupils per year thanks to its tailor-made school activities and screenings.

Presentation Trailers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vttVIRkdkRM&t=1s>

<https://www.institut-francais.org.uk/read-watch-listen-list/best-of-2024-2025-at-the-french-institute/#A51OzGrTEIM>

6. Guidelines for drafting the bill



Description of the main auditorium

The main auditorium has 225 seats (seating plan further below) and is situated on the first floor of the Cultural Centre (see plans further below). It is accessible for people with reduced mobility thanks to a lift, and there is a dedicated space for one person in a wheelchair. The restroom is adapted for people with reduced mobility. The stage is not accessible for people with reduced mobility. There is a balcony, which is not open to the public. There is a projection room. There are unutilized spaces behind the projection room. There are also dressing/green rooms and a bathroom behind the auditorium.

Objectives of the tender

The French Institute intends to refurbish and modernize its main auditorium and the adjacent spaces, by proceeding in three separate phases:

Phase 1 – refurbishment of the auditorium, installation of new restrooms, improvement of accessibility for disabled users, and creation of a vestibule between the cinema and the lobby.

Phase 2 – refurbishment / conversion of the unutilized spaces behind the projection room and connection with the projection room

Phase 3 – refurbishment of the dressing/green rooms and the bathroom backstage

The bill must propose these three phases as separate deliverables, with separate budgets and timetables.

Phase 1

Taking into account the **original Neo Art Deco features** of the venue and the **polyvalent aspect** of the auditorium, the refurbishment process should focus on:

- Improvement of accessibility for disabled users, installation of a new restroom
- Creation of a vestibule between the cinema and the lobby.
- New painting of the walls and the ceilings
- New carpeting
- Renew the seats' textile (cloth fabric), change some of the seats, however, keep the current proportions in terms of seat height and space between rows
- Propose convenient seat boosters
- Create an additional permanent space for a wheelchair (seat E4?) and/or put a retractable seat (seat E3?) - include BS 8300 code of practice to Cine 1: 1 empty seat for a wheelchair and several quick release seats (all between E1 & 4)
- Sound isolation of the main door and the emergency exit door
- Improve the lights in the room and on stage (lights structure for Q&A sessions)

Modernise and upgrade the lighting equipment — including house lights and stage lights — to meet current professional standards and ensure full compliance with health and safety regulations. This includes new lighting fixtures, control systems, and rigging.

- **Comprehensive upgrade of the projection and audio systems in Ciné Lumière's main auditorium** to meet current industry standards and ensure future-proofing for the next decade, including 4K laser projection, 7.1 surround sound, and integrated automation for lighting, curtains, masking, and safety systems ([see Annex 1 for technical specifications](#))
- Modernize screen – masking – curtains, and study the possibility of a bigger screen for the cinema
Modernise the projection screen system to meet current professional standards, including electric masking and motorised stage curtains.
- Update the electric system backstage
- Update and future-proof the audiovisual connections between the projection booth and the stage. This upgraded infrastructure must ensure reliable, high-performance signal transmission.
- Modernize the stage – add electric and AV hubs on the ground; link the heating system under the stage with the main system; improve the access on stage and allow access to people with reduced mobility, add step lights (example of BFI NFT 1)
- Improve the restroom (plumbing, sink, flush)
- Adapt the balcony for public access in terms of safety and security requirements
- Better management of waste (bins positioning)
- Creation of storage space

In addition, this phase should include advice on better signage for the cinema activity (institute's façade and surroundings), keeping in mind the necessity for authorisations from the RBKC.

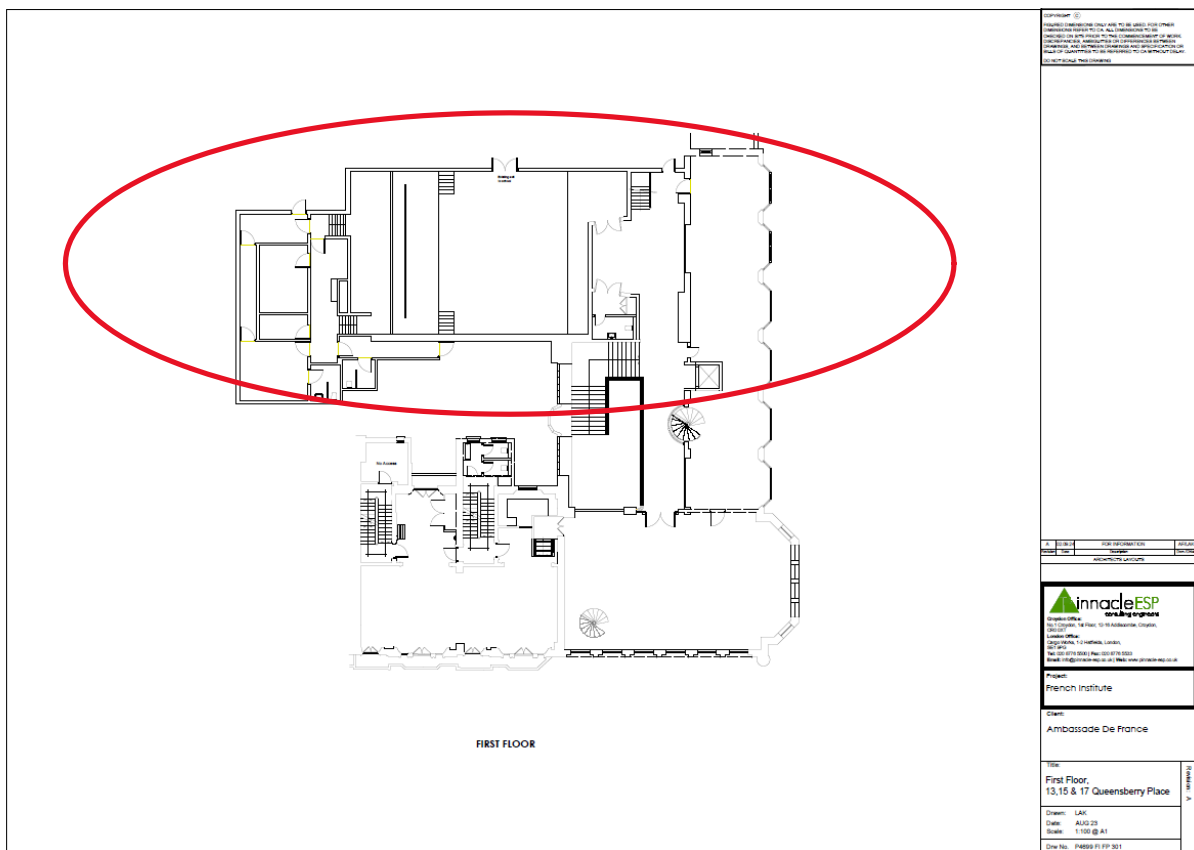
Phase 2

- Refurbishment / conversion of the unutilized spaces behind the projection room in order to create office spaces with natural light and connection with the projection room

Phase 3

- Refurbishment of the dressing/green rooms, the corridor and the adjacent spaces
- Refurbishment of the bathroom backstage

FLOOR PLAN



Annex 1 – Technical Specification for Projection & Audio Upgrade (Phase 1)

This annex defines the audiovisual scope of work to be carried out as part of Phase 1 of the refurbishment of Ciné Lumière’s main auditorium. The upgrade must ensure future-proof,



DCI-compliant, versatile, and interconnected projection and sound systems that serve both cinema and cultural programming needs.

1. Objective

Upgrade the core audiovisual infrastructure of the auditorium to:

- DCI-compliant 4K laser projection
- 7.1 surround sound
- Fully automated curtain, screen and lighting controls
- Compatibility with existing infrastructure and workflows
- Enhanced flexibility for cultural events, presentations, and performances

2. Projection System Specifications

<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Technology	RGB pure laser (no phosphor)
Brightness	≥ 15,000 lumens (ensure 14-16ft on screen for the next decade)
Resolution	Native 4K (4096 × 2160)
Contrast Ratio	≥ 6000:1 full field on/off
Color Gamut	≥ 95% Rec. 2020
DCI Compliance	Required
Cooling	External exhaust duct
Warranty	≥ 3 years manufacturer-backed

Preferred brand: Christie or equivalent

3. Audio System Specifications (7.1)

The audio system must deliver high-performance playback capabilities that meet or exceed Dolby Digital 7.1 reference specifications. The design must be suited to a 225-seat commercial-grade auditorium and meet full compliance with SMPTE ST 428-2 and ISO 2969 (X-curve) standards.

System Performance Criteria:

<i>Specification</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
System Type	Dolby 7.1 cinema surround configuration
Reference SPL	≥ 105 dB(C) continuous at reference seat, with ≥ 20 dB dynamic headroom



Frequency Response	35 Hz – 18 kHz (± 3 dB) for all main speaker channels
Sub-bass Performance	≥ 115 dB SPL @ 40 Hz in main seating zone
Distortion (THD+N)	$< 0.05\%$ at rated output
Amplification	Class D amps with ≥ 2000 W peak per channel, networkable and DSP-integrated
EQ & Processing	Digital processing (parametric EQ, delay, gain) compliant with Dolby specs
Coverage Uniformity	$\leq \pm 3$ dB SPL variation across entire seating area
Rigging & Safety	Compliant with EN standards for fixed cinema installations in the UK

All cabling must be balanced, shielded, and terminated using professional-grade connectors. Final commissioning must include full calibration using Dolby or X-Curve reference materials and documentation of all acoustic measurements.

4. Screen & Masking System

- Matte, micro-perforated projection screen
- Motorised roll-up mechanism
- Maximum screen width and height within available aperture
- Replacement includes review and repositioning of cinema speakers

Masking system must:

- Be motorised and programmable
- Support the following aspect ratios:
 - 2.39:1 (Scope)
 - 1.85:1 (Flat)
 - 1.66:1
 - 1.37:1
 - 1.33:1
- Be controllable both from the projection booth and from the stage

5. Stage Lighting System

The stage lighting system must support both live performance and professional filming environments, ensuring flicker-free output, precise color rendering, and broadcast-friendly flexibility.



It must support:

- Q&A sessions
- Talks and presentations
- Cine-concerts
- Small concerts or performances

Specifications:

- Flicker-free operation at all dimming levels, suitable for HD and 4K filming
- High CRI (Color Rendering Index ≥ 90) front lighting to ensure accurate skin tones on camera for faces
- Front lighting to provide clear face illumination without glare
- DMX-compatible fixtures with programmable scenes, including basic RGB or colour-mixing capabilities for atmospheric backlighting, curtains and toplights
- Full dimmability with lighting presets and manual control via lighting desk
- Includes upgraded house lighting
- All rigging, cabling, installation included
- Must integrate with auditorium automation system

6. Compatibility & Infrastructure Requirements

Update and future-proof the audiovisual connections between the projection booth and the stage. This upgraded infrastructure must ensure reliable, high-performance signal transmission by installing:

- 4 × 3G-SDI lines
- 2 optical fibre links
- 24 XLR inputs + 6 XLR outputs
- 2 DMX lines
- 8 Ethernet connections (Cat6 or higher)

New systems must be fully compatible with the following existing infrastructure:

<i>System</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Image Pro II Scaler	Input/output via HDMI, DVI, or SDI
Library Server	Ingest compatibility required
LANSAT Satellite Receiver	Signal ingest and routing supported



Blu-ray Player	HD playback and signal routing supported
Dolby IMS3000	Full DCP ingest/playback integration

7. Automation & Fire Safety

All systems must be integrated into the central control architecture of the auditorium.

Automation features:

- Motorised curtain control
- Masking presets
- Projector and sound system standby
- Lighting scene presets for various use cases
- Power control for stage equipment

Fire alarm integration:

- Audio auto-mute on fire alarm trigger
- House lights forced on
- Projection/masking halted or reset
- Installation must be tested with building's fire alarm system

8. Services Required

- Delivery and customs clearance
- Installation of projection, audio, lighting and control equipment
- Projector alignment and certification
- Audio calibration and speaker hanging
- Lighting programming
- Connectivity and automation testing
- Staff training (minimum half-day)



- Technical documentation and as-built report

9. Proposal Requirements

Each proposal must include:

- Itemised quotation (excluding and including VAT)
- Technical datasheets and product references
- Warranty terms (minimum 3 years)
- Installation timeline and delivery schedule
- Certification of DCI and Dolby compliance
- References from similar cinema projects