



Awarding funds from
THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®

2020/21 Annual Funding Programme

Guidance Notes

Deadline for Applications	Decisions
4pm, Thursday 12 December 2019	1 April 2020

Please note that a number of **significant changes** have been made to this programme and its application process. Read these guidance notes carefully before beginning an online application.

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's 2020/21 Annual Funding Programme.

These notes give information on the Programme's objectives, who is eligible to apply to the programme and how to submit an application. It also describes how your application will be assessed and what you will be asked to do if you are awarded a grant.

These Guidance Notes and the relevant application form are available on request in large print format and disk and also on the Arts Council's website:

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org> .

AIMS OF THE 2020/21 ANNUAL FUNDING PROGRAMME

The aim of the Annual Funding Programme (AFP) is to support Northern Ireland's arts infrastructure through grants to organisations in all artforms and practices for their core and programming costs. AFP organisations will be key to helping us achieve the objectives set out in our new draft 5-year strategic framework for developing the arts, *Inspire / Connect / Lead*¹, and we expect all awardees to support us in delivering these objectives.

In addition, the arts can make a meaningful contribution to outcomes identified in the *Draft Programme for Government (2016 to 2021)*², the overarching aim of which is to improve the wellbeing of everyone in Northern Ireland by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth. The Arts Council will monitor and report to the Department for Communities on the relevant outcomes from AFP funding to ensure strategic alignment with Departmental as well as broader government strategy.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

The arts sector is again facing a financially challenging year. As we reach the end of the current departmental forecasts as set out in DfP's *Briefing on NI Budgetary Outlook 2018-20*³, it is prudent to anticipate an overall budget reduction from our Government funds. In light of this, the Arts Council does not expect to be able to offer uplifts in grants from 2019/20 funding levels.

¹ *Inspire / Connect / Lead*, <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-Draft-5-year-Strategic-Framework-for-Developing-the-Arts-2019-2024.pdf>

² *Draft Programme for Government (2016 to 2021)*, <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/programme-government-framework-working-draft>

³ <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/briefing-northern-ireland-budgetary-outlook-2018-20-0>

2019/20 AFP Clients

If you are a current AFP client you are unlikely to receive more than standstill funding. The level of ACNI funding included in your 2020/21 budget provided with your new application must not exceed your 2019/20 AFP award levels in relation to both Core and Programming. Your responses to questions about the programme you will deliver and how you will manage it must be based on this standstill ACNI figure⁴. Even if you would like to request more than your 2019/20 AFP award levels (which you may do), you must use your standstill figure as the basis of the ACNI contribution to the budget enclosure included in your application.

An opportunity to request an increased level of investment and to tell us what this increased investment would deliver is provided separately within the application form. Your total request for this application will be your standstill figure (standstill core and programming combined) **plus** this additional funding request figure, (if you choose to request additional funding). In **exceptional circumstances**, we would be prepared to consider a higher level of investment than that awarded for 2019/20. However, please keep in mind that an increase in funding would be very unlikely, given the potential for cuts to the Arts Council's 2020/21 funding allocation.

New Applicants

If you are a new applicant to the programme, that is, you were not a recipient of a 2019/20 AFP award⁵, please keep in mind that the amount of money available is limited and demand for funds is likely to be extremely high. It is not usually possible to fund all applications which simply meet the criteria or to fund the entirety of any given request.

You should be realistic in your expectations and budgets, and bear in mind that the Council may choose to fund specific elements of your proposal rather than the full request.

Programme Funding

To help fund our Annual Funding Programme we will use money from our share of the National Lottery, as well as from our direct grant from the Government. Our funding for some organisations will be entirely from Exchequer (our Government grant) and for others from Lottery revenue. We will decide how to use these different sources of revenue, **but we will assess and treat all organisations exactly the same, wherever their funding investment comes from.**

⁴ The 2020/21 budget presented in your application may of course be different overall from your 2019/20 budget as a result of varying contributions in 2020/21 from other funders or income sources.

⁵ Please note, if you received a "Soft Landing" award as a result of your 2019/20 AFP application, you will be considered a new applicant to the programme in 2020/21.

ELIGIBILITY

WHO CAN APPLY?

All applicants must demonstrate that they require a **year-round arts delivery resource** and should apply in relation to their complete programme for the year. The following organisations are eligible to apply:

- Non-profit distributing organisations which can demonstrate they require a year-round resource to deliver their arts programme
- Commercial organisations can only apply for support if the proposed programme is primarily for the benefit of the public and where there are plans to re-invest any surplus into a similar and ongoing arts programme
- **ALL** new applicants to the programme must have received at least £10,000 in one of the last three financial years from the Arts Council (2019/20, 2018/19 or 2017/18).
- **Before making an application to the AFP programme, all new applicants (and only new applicants⁶) must discuss their application with the relevant Artform Officer in order to be considered eligible for application. This mandatory discussion must take place in good time prior to the programme closure deadline. The latest date on which this discussion can take place is **Friday 29 November 2019**.**

WHO CANNOT APPLY?

- Organisations planning short term or fixed term projects, or single or one-off annual events. (The Arts Council has a number of other programmes through which it assists these types of projects; you should consult with our staff about these alternative programmes.)
- Individuals
- Central Government Departments
- Statutory bodies and Local Authorities
- Broadcasters (excluding community service broadcasters)
- Organisations which have not received at least £10,000 in one of the last three financial years

⁶ 2019/20 AFP clients do not need to meet with Artform Officers prior to applying.

WHAT YOU CAN APPLY FOR

You can apply for one year funding only. Eligible costs include the following:

- **Core costs:**

- Administrative salaries
- Rent and Rates
- Light and Heat
- Maintenance, security, etc.
- Telephone and Fax
- Printing, postage, stationery
- Financial costs
- Insurance

- **Programming costs:**

- Artists' costs
- Volunteer expenses
- Audience Development plans
- Publicity/Marketing (excluding catering/merchandising)
- Transportation
- Travel, Accommodation, Subsistence
- Equipment/Materials
- Access/Participation Plans

- **Premium Payments :**

An amount of up to £3,000 each year is available within the grant for successful applicants who can clearly demonstrate that additional costs are associated with the delivery of their project for people with particular needs as defined under Section 75 of The Northern Ireland Act 1998. Please note that premium payments are made retrospectively on submission of evidence of demonstrated use of the services.

HOW TO APPLY

HELP WITH YOUR APPLICATION

These Guidance Notes and the relevant application form are available on request in large print format and disk, and also on the Arts Council's website here:

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org> .

If you need any help or advice completing the application, please contact us on 028 92 623555.

MAKING AN ONLINE APPLICATION

You must apply using our online system. We will not accept applications in hard copy or by email. You will find a link to the Annual Funding Programme webpage here <http://artscouncil-ni.org/funding/for-organisations> .

- **One application is required only. This application will cover both your Core and Programming funding requests.**
- Online applications may be edited, saved and returned up to the closing date.
- You must submit all mandatory enclosures associated with the application at the same time as your application, ie. they must be uploaded to your online application prior to its submission. These enclosures are listed on the Attachments page within the online application and are detailed below.
- **Please ensure that you leave sufficient time to upload all documents to the system as there can be long delays as the closing deadline approaches and the system will shut down at 4.00 pm precisely on the closing date, Thursday 12 December 2019.** If your complete application is not **fully** uploaded when the system closes, your application will not be accepted.
- If you submit your application by the closing deadline, you will receive an automated email advising that your application has been successfully submitted to the system. **If you do not receive this email, your application has not been submitted.**

Remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that we receive the application form and uploaded enclosures by the closing time and date.

MANDATORY ENCLOSURES

These are the documents which you must provide in conjunction with your application. Some of these must be uploaded to your online application via the Attachments page; others must be uploaded to the Government Funding Database (GFD - see notes below).

Please keep in mind the following important points:

- All mandatory enclosures must be in **Word, Excel or pdf format**. We cannot accept documents in other formats.
- **The total size of all your uploaded documents should not exceed 25 Mb.**
- You must upload **all** the necessary enclosures prior to submitting your online application. **If any enclosures are missing, your application will be ineligible.**
- If you upload an enclosure in a format which we do not accept or which is corrupted or which we cannot open, the enclosure will be considered missing **and your application will be ineligible.**
- Do not compress files into one zip file. Files must be uploaded as individual documents.
- **All data and file formats must be PC compatible.** If an enclosure in a non-PC compatible file is supplied, the enclosure will be considered missing **and your application will be ineligible.** For example, if using a MAC, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any enclosures uploaded to the online application are PC compatible.
- The submission of weblinks or website addresses in lieu of enclosure documents is not acceptable and **will result in your application being made ineligible.**

You **must** upload the following to your AFP application before submission (**read on** for detailed guidance and information on the additional documents that you must upload to the **GFD, page 10 onwards**):

- **Detailed budget for 2020/21 core costs⁷.** This must include forecast income *and* expenditure. All budget lines above £1,000 should be broken down into component parts, where appropriate. This breakdown should also indicate how much of the Arts Council's grant you would apply to each element.

⁷ The level of ACNI funding included in your 2020/21 core budget enclosure must not exceed your 2019/20 AFP award level.

MANDATORY ENCLOSURES (cont)

- **Detailed 2020/21 budget for programming costs⁸**: This must include forecast income *and* expenditure. All budget lines above £1,000 should be broken down into component parts, where appropriate. This breakdown should also indicate how much of the Arts Council's grant you would apply to each element.
- **Management accounts for the period up to 31 March 2019** : **IF** the accounts uploaded to the Government Funding Database are not for 2018/19 – see additional notes below
- **Detailed description of your planned 2020/21 arts programme⁹** :This must include the total cost for each element of your programming.
- **Cuts Impact Paper**. A paper giving precise detail of the impact of any decrease in ACNI funding. See below and page 12 for further details.
- **Governance + Staffing Details Paper**
- **Your Organisation's Financial Procedures Document¹⁰**
- **NEW APPLICANTS ONLY - Copies of board minutes** : from the 1 October 2018 to 31 October 2019

If available and relevant, you should also upload the following:

- Details of Premium Payment costs if these are being requested
- Copies of letters of offer from partnership funders or sponsors

Cuts Impact Paper

In the event that Arts Council funding is cut in the coming financial year, we may have to reduce AFP awards from their 2019/20 levels, or some organisations may exit the programme entirely. The Cuts Impact Paper which you will provide may inform our decision in relation to potential cuts. It will set out the impact of cuts on your organisation's operations and programme delivery; it will give an indication of how the cuts will affect the beneficiaries of your programmes, both quantitatively (estimate the number of beneficiaries affected) and qualitatively (the depth of participation – eg. reduced hours of contact/engagement with programming).

⁸ The level of ACNI funding included in your 2020/21 programming budget enclosure must not exceed your 2019/20 AFP award level.

⁹ If you are a sectoral support organisation, this would be a description of your planned 2020/21 programme of activities.

¹⁰ We are requesting your Financial Procedures document only. Do not provide unasked for policy documents.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING DATABASE

As part of Government's Reducing Bureaucracy programme, you are required to upload a number of master documents to the Government Funding Database (GFD). Many organisations in receipt of ACNI funds are already registered with this database; others will be required to register prior to the application being assessed. Once uploaded, these documents will exist for all applications you make to any Government department and you will not be required to submit them with individual applications, including future applications to the Arts Council.

If you are based in Northern Ireland, the following documents **MUST** be uploaded to the Government Funding Database at

<https://govfundingpublic.nics.gov.uk/Home.aspx>

- Constitution and/or Memorandum and Articles of Association
- Most recent set of Audited/Certified/adopted accounts.
- Organisation Chart
- Rental Agreement/Lease/Evidence of ownership

If you are based outside Northern Ireland you **MUST** upload the 4 documents listed above **AND** all the mandatory enclosures listed on pages 7 and 8 above at the time of submitting your online application.

If you are not currently on the Database you will be required to register at <https://govfundingpublic.nics.gov.uk/Home.aspx> Full instructions for uploading documents to the Government Funding Database are available for download from the Arts Council's website.

DETAILED GUIDANCE ON MANDATORY ENCLOSURES

Further information on all mandatory enclosures can be found below. If you have any queries about any of the documents, please contact the Arts Council of Northern Ireland on 028 92 623555.

Please Note: Whether you are a first-time applicant or a returning AFP client of long-standing, it is your responsibility to ensure that you upload all the requested mandatory enclosures to your application prior to submission. If any enclosures are missing, your application will be made ineligible.

Mandatory Enclosure	Upload to	Guidance on Enclosure
Detailed budget for 2020/21 core costs	Online Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This must include income <i>and</i> expenditure. All budget lines above £1,000 must be broken down into component parts, where appropriate. This breakdown must also indicate how much of the Arts Council’s grant you would apply to each budget line. You must itemize expenditure wherever possible (example: “Annual rent £12,000” is acceptable but “Salaries £100,000” must be broken down to give specific details). You should also include details of how you have calculated any fees you are paying, e.g. hourly/daily/weekly rates.
Detailed budget for 2020/21 programming costs	Online Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This must include income <i>and</i> expenditure. All budget lines above £1,000 must be broken down into component parts, where appropriate. This breakdown must also indicate how much of the Arts Council’s grant you would apply to each budget line. You should also include details of premium payments costs, where applicable. You must itemize expenditure wherever possible and also include details of how you have calculated any fees you are paying in relation to programming costs, e.g. hourly/daily/weekly rates.
Management Accounts up to the period 31 March 2019	Online Application	Applicants are required to upload a copy of their organisation’s most recent Audited/Certified Accounts to the Government Funding Database. If the accounts uploaded to the GFD are not for the year 2018/19 (ie, if your most recent audited accounts are for the 2017/18 financial year), we require a set of management accounts covering the intervening period, up to March 2019. We require these accounts to help us assess the overall financial well-being of your organisation and to judge whether there is a need for Arts Council funding.

Mandatory Enclosure	Upload to	Guidance on Enclosure
<p>Detailed description of your planned 2020/21 arts programme¹¹</p>	<p>Online Application</p>	<p>You should describe in detail the programming you intend to deliver, describing the overall aims and objectives of each programming element and all the activities within it. You should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total cost for each element of programming • Locations and dates of all planned activities/events • Intended audiences¹², how you will engage them and estimates of their numbers • Where relevant, details of programme partnership organisations (ie, tell us who the partnership organisations are and what they will contribute to the project) • Names of artists, tutors, facilitators (if known) for each event or programming element; OR details of the process you intend to use to select the artists. • Projected participation in each event or project – numbers and age ranges – whether they will actively participate or will be an audience for a final presentation • For organisations whose programme includes the production of artistic material (journals, magazines, books, film, CD, or other media) a list of titles with print run and projected sales. Such organisations should also document promotional events associated with these materials (launches, readings, viewings, etc.) • Name of Project Manager for each major programming element/event, along with a brief experience statement <p>How much should you write?</p> <p>Please note that the word levels indicated below are <u>maximums only</u> :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are applying for £200,000 or more your detailed project description should be no more than 5,000 words¹³. Any additional words will be discounted. • If you are applying for between £50,000 and £199,999 your detailed project description should be no more than 4,000 words. Any additional words will be discounted.

¹¹ If you are a sectoral support organisation, this would be your planned 2020/21 programme of activities.

¹² By “audiences” we mean all types of audiences, including participants, visitors, readers, content viewers.

¹³ Please note: this does not mean that your description must be 5,000 words.

Mandatory Enclosure	Upload to	Guidance on Enclosure
Detailed description (cont.)	Online Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are applying for between £25,000 and £49,999 your detailed project description should be no more than 3,000 words. Any additional words will be discounted. If you are applying for less than £25,000, your detailed project description should be no more than 2,000 words. Any additional words will be discounted.
Cuts Impact Paper	Online Application	<p>A paper giving precise detail of the impact of any decrease in funding. You should address each of the funding scenarios below in no more than 300¹⁴ words each.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of a 5% cut from standstill - detail what specifically would be affected, if anything, in core and programming separately. For example: Core: loss of post, reduction in hours, reduced marketing; Programming: loss of specific programming element/event or reduction in the hours of a specific activity. <p>In addition to detailing the impact of cuts on your organisation's operations and programme delivery, the paper should also give an indication of how the cuts may affect the beneficiaries of your programmes, both quantitatively (estimate the number of beneficiaries affected) and qualitatively (the depth of participation – eg. reduced hours of contact/engagement with programming).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of a 10% cut from standstill - detail what specifically would be affected, if anything, in core and programming separately. For example: Core: loss of post, reduction in hours, reduced marketing; Programming: loss of specific programming element/event or reduction in the hours of a specific activity. <p>In addition to detailing the impact of cuts on your organisation's operations and programme delivery, the paper should also give an indication of how the cuts may affect the beneficiaries of your programmes, both quantitatively (estimate the number of beneficiaries affected) and qualitatively (the depth of participation – eg. reduced hours of contact/engagement with programming).</p>
Governance + Staffing Details Paper	Online Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A list of your organisation's current board members, specifying office bearers, which details any relevant specialism each brings to the role and provides the date on which each member joined the board.

¹⁴ Please note: this is a maximum only; it does not mean that you *must write 300 words*.

Mandatory Enclosure	Upload to	Guidance on Enclosure
Governance + Staffing Details Paper (cont)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of the dates on which your board has met in the period 1 October 2018 to 31 October 2019. • A list of your organisation’s current sub-committees, detailing who is on each sub-committee. • A list of the dates on which the sub-committees met in the period 1 October 2018 to 31 October 2019. • Dates of any governance training delivered to Board members since they were appointed. • IF your organisation has 15 permanent members of staff or less (as opposed to 15 FTEs), provide a list of job titles and indicate whether the post is currently filled. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IF your organisation has more than 15 permanent members of staff, provide a list of senior management job titles; indicate whether each post is currently filled; and provide a summary of other roles/numbers (for example, <i>Administrative Assistants : 5</i>)
Your Organisation’s Financial Procedures Document	Online Application	<p>This is the document which sets out your financial policies and systems.</p> <p>Indicate when the procedures were approved by your board.</p>
Board Minutes	Online Application	NEW APPLICANTS ONLY – if you are a new applicant to the programme, you will need to provide us with copies of minutes from your board meetings in the period 1 October 2018 to 31 October 2019.
Details of Premium Payments	Online Application	IF RELEVANT : If Premium Payment funds are an element of your request, you must detail exactly what these funds will be used to support. For example, sign language interpretation, Braille paperwork, transport costs, provision of crèche facilities. Remember that you will not receive these funds in advance and, in order to claim the funds, you will have to demonstrate the number of people who used the Premium-Payment-related services.
Copies of LOOs from Other Funders	Online Application	IF AVAILABLE: If you have any letters from sponsors or other funders you should include them with your application as demonstration of support.

Mandatory Enclosure	Upload to	Guidance on Enclosure
Constitution and/or Memorandum and Articles of Association	GFD	Please note: The name of your organisation as given in your constitution document should be the same name as that given in the application, and on your organisation's bank account, details of which we will request if you receive an award.
Most recent set of Audited/Certified Accounts	GFD	Please note : if these accounts are not for 2018/19, ie up to the period 31 March 2019, you must upload a set of management accounts with your application (see above).
Organisation Chart	GFD	This is a diagram showing us the structure of your organisation, in terms of staff, board and committees.
Rental Agreement / Lease / Evidence of Ownership	GFD	These documents are in relation to the premises from which your organisation operates.

AFTER YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

- The Arts Council will acknowledge receipt of the application form.
- The application will primarily be assessed by an Arts Development Officer or the relevant Head of Department, with input on finance and governance matters from the relevant Assistant Arts Development Officer.
- Officer assessments will be subject to a moderation process.
- Moderation recommendations will be presented to the Arts Council Board who will make the final decision in relation to your application.
- The Arts Council will contact you with the final decision by letter. If your application is rejected, the Council will provide you with detailed reasons for the rejection.

IF YOU RECEIVE AN AWARD

LETTER OF OFFER

Following the decision, successful applicants will be issued with a contract outlining the conditions attached to the award and the specific budget lines against which the award has been allocated.

- It is important that you read the letter of offer and enclosed conditions carefully before signing and returning it. The letter of offer will set out what you may spend the grant on and by what date the project must be completed.
- **If there are any changes to your project from the original application, the Arts Council must be informed immediately in writing before any project expenditure is incurred.** If you don't tell us about changes you may have to repay the award and this will affect decisions on any future applications you might make.

FAILING TO MEET YOUR LETTER OF OFFER REQUIREMENTS

If your organisation is not meeting the requirements set out in your letter of offer, our first step will be to give you appropriate feedback (usually through your allocated Arts Development Officer or Head of Artform) and discuss this with you, so we can all understand and agree what the problems may be.

We expect your organisation's board to be informed about any concerns we express, either in discussion at a meeting or in writing. We also expect that the board, working with your organisation's executive officers, will deal with the relevant issues and provide prompt and constructive advice on how you can meet the requirements set out in your funding agreement.

If your organisation breaks any terms of the funding agreement (including your obligations concerning branding and publicity), we may take further action in addition to the feedback and discussion outlined above (which would always be a first-stage measure). Intervention measures, which we would take in collaboration with you, might include:

- Additional payment conditions
- Agreed action plans responding to our concerns
- Increased monitoring and reporting

We will take appropriate action if your organisation continues to break the terms and conditions of your letter of offer. Further interventions might include the following:

- Consultant review of your organisation
- Stakeholder review
- Withholding payment.
- Withdrawing funding
- Request for repayment of funds

HOW PAYMENTS WILL BE MADE

Payments will be made in stages as set out in your letter of offer - depending on the level of risk associated with your organization, this payment profile may be altered in keeping with the need for additional financial monitoring.

Each stage will have specific monitoring conditions attached to it; your letter of offer will set out these specific conditions and you must comply with them prior to the drawdown of each tranche of funding. Payments will be made by BACS transfer only. You will need to complete and return the BACS form issued with your letter of offer.

MONITORING

The aims of the monitoring process are to:

- Set and agree targets to be achieved by you in return for funding from the Arts Council.
- Gather sufficient information to determine whether or not the objectives and targets have been met by you.
- Use the information to make decisions on future funding and at what level.
- Use the information to make the case for the arts to Government.

The objectives and targets will differ between arts sectors and individual organisations. However, there are a number of elements in all organisations which are so significant they will be monitored in all cases.

- Delivery of objectives/targets as outlined in the application form
- Quality of product and/or activity
- Organisational Governance
- Financial Management

At the conclusion of your project you will have to complete and submit the Arts Council's Annual Funding Survey. Failure to submit this report on time may impact the assessment of your future grant submissions.

MONITORING – Verification Visits

Your project may also be subject to a Verification Visit by an Assistant Arts Development Officer or member of our Finance Team to ensure that the project grant has been spent as agreed in your letter of offer and that all processes (eg. procurement, recruitment, processing of payments within your organisation) related to project delivery were in compliance with LOO conditions and your own stated financial procedures. It is therefore important that you retain all the project documentation which evidences this.

CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE / ADULTS AT RISK

Organisations that work with children, young people and adults at risk need to ensure that their safeguarding systems and procedures adhere to best practice. Please see the information below to consider in relation to your own organisation's procedures and note that you must agree a protection policy statement as part of your application form.

It is a requirement of our funding that any organisation which comes into contact with children, young people and adults at risk, either directly through its programmes or indirectly through its services, must commit to a Safeguarding Policy which must have been formally agreed by your organisation.

If your Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are older than 3 years please review and update them to ensure your policy and procedures are in line with best practice and legislation relating to protection issues. If you are successful in obtaining a grant, the Arts Council may, as part of its monitoring processes, ask to see these documents during the incoming year.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

It is a requirement of our funding that your organisation commits to equality of opportunity and good relations duty.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has a statutory duty under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, in carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between all Section 75 groups and you will note that you must agree an Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations policy statement as part of your application form.

HOW WE WILL MAKE OUR DECISION

Assessing Officers will consider applications using their professional judgement, based on the information provided within the application, knowledge of your organisation's track record (in relation to both arts delivery and its previous management of ACNI funding), knowledge of the wider arts landscape, and the competitive context in which all applications are evaluated.

New Applicant Check

Applications from new applicants will undergo a preliminary check by the relevant Assessing Officer to determine whether the application is **Adequate for Consideration** or **Not Adequate for Consideration** for the Annual Funding Programme. Applications which are deemed not adequate will be rejected at this point.

Decision	Description
Adequate	The application is of an appropriate level of quality and the proposal is a good fit with the Annual Funding Programme.
Not Adequate	The application is of insufficient quality / lacks detail and the proposal is not a good fit with the Annual Funding Programme.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Programme Criteria Assessment

Eligible applications will be assessed against the following criteria and rated **Outstanding, Strong, Met or Not Met** in relation to each criterion¹⁵.

AFP Programme Criteria	
C1: Inspire - Artistic excellence and creative innovation	O / S / M / NM
C2: Lead - Contribution to Sectoral Development	O / S / M / NM
C3: Connect - Public Benefit and Engagement	O / S / M / NM
C4: Organisational Capacity and Governance	O / S / M / NM

An overall rating of **Not Met** against any of the 4 criteria will mean that an application cannot be recommended for funding.

¹⁵ Further detail on the assessment of these criteria can be found at Appendix 1, p 24.

Rating	Description
Outstanding	The application addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion ¹⁶ comprehensively and in an exemplary manner. There are no shortcomings whatsoever.
Strong	The application addresses the criterion very well. It gives clear, convincing information on the evidence needed. Any concerns or areas of weakness are minor.
Met	The application addresses the criterion to a sufficient degree, although some improvements could be made. It gives information on nearly all of the evidence needed, although there are some gaps.
Not Met	The application provides insufficient evidence or relevant information in the context of the criterion and is not compelling or persuasive in a competitive funding context.

PFG Outcomes Assessment

Applications will also be assessed against the following PFG Outcomes. Their contribution to the Outcomes will be rated as **Significant**, **Moderate** or **Limited**:

No	Programme for Government Outcome
5	We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential.
9	We are a shared, welcoming society that respects diversity.
10	We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.

A rating of **Limited** against PFG Outcomes will not prohibit a financial recommendation.

Rating	Description
Significant	The proposal makes a significant contribution to PFG Outcome
Moderate	The proposal makes a moderate contribution to PFG Outcome
Limited	The proposal makes a limited contribution to PFG Outcome

¹⁶ Each of the 4 main criteria will include a number of sub-criteria, which are set out in Appendix 1.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment will be carried out on the application, which will then be rated **Minor, Moderate or Major** in relation to risk. The assessment will consider the applicant's ability to deliver the programme of work as set out in the application and the associated risk to ACNI's funding investment, both in terms of capacity/governance and the organisation's financial resilience.

Portfolio Ranking Assessment

On the basis of their assessment (as set out above) and on their knowledge of the artform sector as a whole, the Assessing Officer will consider the application within the strategic context of its artform and allocate its Portfolio Ranking.

THE DECISION PROCESS

Assessing Officers' assessments and recommendations are subject to a moderation process, which involves a number of discussion stages.

Stage 1 Moderation

Arts Development Officers will present and discuss their assessments and risk ratings within their teams. Applications which have achieved a rating of **Not Met** against any criterion will be rejected at this stage.

Stage 2 Moderation

Arts Development Officers will present and discuss applications within the wider strategic context of their artform within their teams. Portfolio Rankings are agreed and the Assessing Officer will also present their financial recommendations at this stage.

Stage 3 Moderation

All assessments and financial recommendations from the previous stages are considered in relation to the budgetary provision and in the context of the range of artforms, types of organisation, geographical spread and risk to ensure balance across the entire AFP portfolio.

Stage 4 Moderation

This final moderation stage at which any remaining points for discussion can be raised and final financial recommendations agreed. This discussion will also consider the possibility of the adverse equality impacts of any proposed cuts.

Final decision

Financial recommendations resulting from Stage 4 Moderation and their equality impacts are considered by the Board, which makes the final decision. Where necessary the Board will reserve the right to use its discretion in reaching award decisions, based on the need to maintain a balanced portfolio within the funds at its disposal.

Is the Arts Council decision final?

There is a review procedure, which is available on the website and will be sent out to any unsuccessful applicants.

OTHER INFORMATION

If you have any queries about the programme or need any help or advice completing the application, please contact the Operations Officer on 028 92 623555.

These Guidance Notes and the relevant application form are available on request in large print format and disk, and also on the Arts Council's website here:

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org> .

Good luck with your application!

AFP Programme Criteria

C1: Artistic excellence and creative innovation

We will take the following C1 Sub-criteria into account when assessing your application:

- Your organisation's track record of delivering work of artistic excellence and innovation / creative risk-taking / high quality support to the arts sector¹⁷
- The artistic quality of your proposed 2020/21 programming / quality of your proposed 2020/21 programme¹⁸
- The level of innovation / creative risk-taking in your proposed 2020/21 programming.
- The quality of your creative partnerships / partnerships

C1 assessment will be based on the following

- Information provided in your application (including enclosures)
- Knowledge of your organisation's track record
- Knowledge of the artform / arts practice context of your proposal

C2: Contribution to Sectoral Development

We will take the following C2 Sub-criteria into account when assessing your application:

- How your organisation works in partnership with other organisations both within the arts sector (within your own area of practice and cross-artform) and beyond it to develop the arts sector within Northern Ireland.
- How you support the development of artistic talent/arts practice of artists/practitioners from Northern Ireland (this could include commissioning new work, mentoring, supporting artists/practitioners to learn new skills, or offering time/space/resources to develop).
- Your organisation's policy on the remuneration of artists.
- *If you are a sectoral support organisation* - How your organisation promotes best practice within all aspects of the sector, including in relation to the remuneration of artists.

C2 assessment will be based on the following

- Information provided in your application (including enclosures)
- Knowledge of your organisation's track record
- Knowledge of the artform / arts practice context of your proposal

C3: Public Benefit and Engagement

We will take the following C3 Sub-criteria into account when assessing your application:

- How you create / advocate for more opportunities for children and young people to engage with high quality arts experiences.

¹⁷ ...high quality support to the arts sector - For sectoral support organisations only

¹⁸ ...quality of your proposed 2020/21 programme - For sectoral support organisations

- How you improve / advocate for access /participation in the arts for people with a disability¹⁹.
- How you work to reduce barriers to access /participation by groups who are currently least engaged in the arts, for example, due to socio-economic factors²⁰.
- The geographic range of the work you will deliver in 2020/21²¹
- How you will work to increase the number and range of people who have the opportunity to experience or participate in high quality art (this can include, for example, touring or plans to support, produce and distribute creative content and experiences digitally).
- Your plans for keeping current audiences and developing new ones²² or, if *you are a sectoral support organisation*, how you will work to support audience development and information capture within the arts sector.
- How you track your current audience and collect feedback from them²³.

C3 assessment will be based on the following

- Information provided in your application (including enclosures)
- Knowledge of your organisation's track record of engagement
- Knowledge of the artform / arts practice context of your proposal

C4: Organisational Capacity and Governance

We will take the following C4 Sub-criteria into account when assessing your application:

- Your organisation's track record of financial management.
- The financial resilience of your organization, including your level of reserves and how effective you are at maintaining / building them.
- Your organisation's approach to fundraising and/or generating income from sources other than the Arts Council to strengthen the resilience of the organisation.
- How you consider risks to the successful delivery of your programme of work and put in place plans to mitigate these risks.
- The appropriateness of your organisation's financial procedures / controls and financial reporting.
- How your board and sub-committees (where relevant) are structured and what training or induction board and committee members receive.
- The range of skills presented by your board members and the suitability of these skills in relation to your organisation's activity and management.
- Evidence of Board leadership and oversight through planning, communication and reporting mechanisms.
- The appropriateness of your organisation's staffing structure in relation to the management and delivery of your organisation's activities.

¹⁹ Please note: this refers to physical or mental disability.

²⁰DFC, Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2018/19 <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/communities/experience-of-culture-and-arts-northern-ireland-201819.pdf>

²¹ Please be realistic and accurate in response to this sub-criteria.

²² For example, marketing strategy / budget, social media engagement etc.

²³ For example, through audience databases, memberships/subscription list, surveys, evaluations, box office analysis.

- Evidence of a fair and open recruitment process for staff and board members.
- Evidence of succession planning in relation to key staff positions

C4 assessment will be based on the following

- Information provided in your application (including enclosures)
- Knowledge of your organisation's track record in terms of governance and financial management
- Knowledge of your organisation's management of previous ACNI grant awards (AFP and other programmes) including, but not limited to, how you have complied with Letter of Offer monitoring and reporting requirements, eg timely financial reporting, AFS Survey submission.