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Stability and Renewal Programme for Organisations

**THE PROGRAMME WILL BE OPEN FROM WEDNESDAY 28
OCTOBER 2020**

CLOSING DATE 12 noon on FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2020

**WE WILL AIM TO COMMUNICATE DECISIONS
By 29 January 2021**

We will only accept online applications

**Please Note:
The maximum award available is £500,000¹**

**Please read these Guidance Notes and FAQs before
completing and submitting your Application Form**

¹ In exceptional circumstances, the Arts Council will consider requests for a larger award. In this case, you must contact the Arts Council prior to submitting an application.

INTRODUCTION

Following the announcement of a £29m allocation from the NI Executive to support the arts, culture, heritage, languages and the wider creative industries sectors the Arts Council has this co-designed programme with the Department for Communities.

This additional funding will provide a much needed lifeline and significant boost to our cultural sector which has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

The Minister has acknowledged the substantial contribution that these sectors make to our local economy, our quality of life, health and wellbeing, in the shaping of our standing as a place to live, work and visit, and they have a vital part to play in delivering social renewal for communities and people impacted by COVID-19.

All organisations applying can contact the Arts Council for further advice before applying. Existing Arts Council clients should make contact with their Arts Council Officer before applying. All applications will be judged on merit, regardless of any previous relationship with the Arts Council or the Department for Communities.

In meeting need this scheme is also consistent with the three major themes of the Arts Council strategy and the three Outcomes of the Programme for Government, as identified for the arts sector. These are:

Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential.

Outcome 9: We are a shared, welcoming society that respects diversity.

Outcome 10: We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.

ORGANISATION PROGRAMME DETAILS

Purpose:

- Stabilising organisations financially to prevent closure and/or to allow continued delivery of outcomes and underpin longer-term changes
- Support the development of Renewal Plans where appropriate

Objectives:

- Organisations are encouraged to consider how they can contribute to the following key outcomes:
 - Maintaining a balanced and sustainable sector for the longer term
 - Tackling poverty and social exclusion
 - Improving mental health and reducing isolation
 - Responding to the needs of people with disabilities
 - Ensuring diversity of opportunity across Section 75 categories
 - Preserving jobs and underpinning job creation
 - Supporting new skills development for those in most need
 - Supporting and generating new apprenticeship opportunities

- Supporting individual artist residencies or projects
- Commissioning of new work for future presentation, including to new audiences
- Creating new partnerships with other organisations and individuals to devise new work/programmes of activity
- Digitising and adapting to changing audience, visitor and customer demands
- Increasing audiences, particularly those from the most deprived backgrounds and
- Minimising negative environmental impacts and promoting positive ones

ELIGIBILITY

- Constituted organisations/companies whose primary purpose relates to the categories below and which carry out the majority of their work in Northern Ireland.
- Arts, cultural and community venues' main use must be for one of the categories below, and may include arts, cultural and community centres, theatres, galleries, grassroots music venues, comedy venues.,
- Arts, culture and community organisations whose primary role is to create, present or support one (or more) of these categories:
 - Dance
 - Drama
 - Literature
 - Music and Opera
 - Traditional Arts
 - Visual Arts
 - Performing arts and theatre
 - Festivals and cultural events
 - Participatory Arts
 - Circus, Street Theatre and Carnival
 - Comedy
 - Cross Art form
 - Community Arts
 - Creative Industries in the following segments:
 - Independent Cinema
 - Product Design, Fashion Design, and Graphic Design;
 - Crafts;
 - TV, Video, Photography, Film, and Radio;

PROGRAMME CRITERIA

1. Organisational purpose

- Evidence that the organisation's primary role is to create, present or support one (or more) of the defined categories.
- Evidence of the organisation's contribution to public good.
- Evidence of the organisation's contribution to the wider sector in which it operates.

2. Financial viability based on presentation of financial information

- Previous accounts
- Evidence that the organisation was viable pre-Covid
- Current financial position
- Details of deficits and/ or unavoidable costs up to 31 March 2021 arising as a consequence of Covid.
- Redundancy costs may be considered in exceptional financial circumstances if linked to remodelling or renewal plans

3. Description of recovery costs (reopening, adaption and/or resuming activity costs)

- Details of how resuming operations will be undertaken and associated costs
- Requests for managing sub optimal operations, including underwriting the costs of performance/presentation of work due to smaller audiences and reduced box office income as a result of Covid impacts and restrictions
- Demonstration that where venues and facilities will remain closed, that costs of maintaining the facilities and organisation are justifiable and that the cost of later reestablishment would be greater.

4. Description of renewal costs (including renewal plans see below)

- Details of any proposed new activity and projects which can be delivered by 31 March 2021.
- Tell us how our support will help you with your organisation's Renewal Plan and longer term outcomes.

Renewal Plans

Renewal Plans will form an important part of the application and assessment process.

Renewal Plans should set out how organisations will achieve recovery (including safe reopening and safe operations line with general Covid advice and restrictions, and in line with sector and venue specific Covid-safety requirements), and sustainability in the next 2 – 3 years. Plans should be change orientated and explain out how your organisation will contribute to the objectives set out above. These should also be proportionate to the size of organisations, with major venues expected to provide more detailed plans and smaller organisations submitting, short 1 -2 page plans. They should also include how you propose to minimise negative environmental impacts and promote positive ones.

Costs of Renewal Actions as described in your Renewal Plan which can be delivered by 31 March 2021, for example:

- New projects and content which will assist longer term sustainability
- New apprenticeships
- Support for upskilling/training existing staff
- Pilot projects to test longer term plans set out in your Renewal Plan
- Creating new residencies and partnerships with artists and craftspeople, including the commissioning of new work for future presentation
- New projects which reach different audiences and users, focused on poverty, social exclusion and deprivation and
- Proposals to minimise negative environmental impacts and promote positive ones.

WHO CANNOT SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

- Individuals
- Broadcasters (excluding community service broadcasters)
- Central Government Departments
- Applicants to National Lottery Heritage Recovery Fund
- Local Councils (DFC will make separate funding arrangements with the 11 local councils)

HOW MANY APPLICATIONS CAN YOU SUBMIT?

You may submit only **one** application.

However, you can apply for more than one project within your application.

The Council may choose to fund all, some, or no elements of your application. We would encourage all to apply for the minimum funding required, to ensure that the maximum number of organisations can be helped.

WHAT CAN YOU REQUEST?

Eligible costs

Costs to stabilise your organisation in the immediate term to make sure the culture ,arts and creative activity you are involved in is not put further at risk by COVID-19, for example,

- Deficits incurred as a direct result of Covid-19.
- Restoration of reserves where these have been depleted as a result of Covid-19
- Costs of artists, tutors, craftspeople and freelancers (including fees, accommodation, subsistence, travel).
- Staff (except for staff on the Government's furlough scheme)
- Overheads such as rent
- Costs to run immediate risk management reviews and the actions identified as needed to safe-guard your organisation
- Costs to cover essential operational costs, for example, site security
- Redundancy costs to assist with the remodeling or renewal of your organisation

Costs to recover your organisations' activity and operations by reopening and resuming activity, for example:

- Operational costs of recovery actions (reopening and resuming activity)
- Costs associated with sub optimal reopening (e.g. lower audience numbers)
- Organisational/skills development to ensure you are fit for purpose during and after COVID-19
- Specialist skills for on-line presentation of existing or new work
- Modest requests for capital equipment allied to programme/project delivery.
- Staff costs to allow you to respond, design and deliver plans
- Costs to reconfigure business plans, governance and activity needed to help safeguard the future of your organisation
- Costs to help manage your site during social distancing. This could include additional staff to help manage queues, PPE for staff and volunteers, training, additional cleaning, implementing contactless payment methods, or temporary structures to help manage visitors.
- Costs to get advice from professionals, for example on risk, safety, how to support your staff or on new business models
- Costs to cover essential IT equipment and connectivity costs to support homeworking and activities to enable your organisation to put information online and to interact with your community/customers.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

It is unlikely that an individual award will exceed £500,000. In exceptional circumstances the Arts Council will consider requests for a larger award. In this case, you must contact the Arts Council prior to submitting an application.

Please be realistic in your request as there will be considerable demand for these funds.

WHAT YOU CANNOT APPLY FOR

- Organisational debt incurred before March 2020
- Deficits not directly related to Covid-19
- Costs or losses not incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Costs already covered by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, National Heritage Lottery Fund, other funders or Government COVID-19 schemes to cover salaries or grants to manage Covid-related costs. Please note that we will check and you will be asked to sign an anti-fraud statement in your application
- Costs that are avoidable in the short term
- Costs you will incur after 31 March 2021
- Anything that contravenes Governments' advice on COVID-19
- Recoverable VAT. Requests which, before the end of Social Distancing, entail public gathering or conventional audience situations; or otherwise breach social distancing and other COVID-19 guidelines.

We would encourage you to consult the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) Coronavirus guidance website to see if there are other avenues of financial support to help you during this time.

MAKING AN 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 Sustainability & Renewal Programme for Organisations webpage here

- 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. If you realise after submitting your online application that you have not included all the mandatory enclosures you must resubmit a new application with all the relevant mandatory enclosures included before the application deadline of 12noon on Friday 27 November 2020. We cannot accept additional material by any other method or after the deadline. 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 12 noon precisely on the closing date, **Friday 27 November 2020**** 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.**

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

STATE AID

Please note you **must** complete the State Aid questions in the application form.

The Arts Council has to assess if funds granted through the Stability and Renewal Programme for Organisations are subject to state aid regulations.

State aid rules promote a level playing field between EU Member States and help to ensure aid is targeted to address market failures and avoid negative effects on competition

State aid may be present whenever state resources are used to provide assistance that gives organisations that are engaged in economic activity (i.e. undertakings) an advantage over others.

However, where there is a *genuine market failure* and a policy objective of common interest State aid might be necessary and justified.

The European Commission's State aid rules provide the procedural and regulatory framework through which Member States can award State aid legally.

If you are in doubt about completing the two state aid questions please tick both and we will assess if state aid is present.

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.

NB: If you are currently not registered with the Government Funding Database, please submit **ALL** enclosures detailed below with your online application form. Please note that in the event of an award, you will be required to register with the Government Funding Database

Further information on all mandatory enclosures is detailed below:

Mandatory Enclosure	Submit with	Guidance on Enclosure
Constitution and/or Memorandum and Articles of Association (if not uploaded to the Government Funders Database)	Online Application	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 accounts (if not uploaded to the Government Funders Database)	Online Application	Applicants are required to upload a copy (a copy of their organisation's most recent Audited/Certified Accounts to the Government Funding Database or provide a copy with their application form. Please note: if you cannot provide audited/certified Accounts for 2019/20, you must provide your most recent audited Accounts and your latest draft Accounts.
Management Accounts	Online Application	If the accounts uploaded to the GFD or provided with your application are not for the year 2019/20 (ie, if your most recent audited accounts are for the 2018/19 financial year), we require a set of management accounts covering the intervening period, up to March 2020. Applicants are also encouraged to submit the most recent set of management accounts where these are available. We require financial and management accounts to assess the overall financial wellbeing of your organisation and to judge whether there is a need for Arts Council funding.
Bank statement	Online Application	Applicants should provide a current bank statement.

CVs or information on artist/s, groups, technical staff and other personnel proposed to employ as part of the request	Online Application	If you know which artists, groups, technical staff and other personnel proposed to employ as part of the proposal, provide us with copies of their CVs. This will help us assess the quality of your request.
A budget for the financial year end 2020/21 (year ending 31 March 2021) including all covid-19 related grants you have received from Government sources	Online Application	The budget should reflect the income and expenditure which is associated with any planned activity your organisation has in place for the period April 2020 to March 2021. This should provide details of any Covid-19 related grants received from Government sources.
Cash flow for the financial year end 2020/21 (year ending 31 March 2021).	Online Application	The cash flow should provide us with your organisation's opening balance in bank as of 1 April 2020 and detail money due in and money due out, ideally on a monthly basis, for the period April 2020 to March 2021. Applicants should provide a bank statement reconciled to the cashflow statement. If your organisation has received any Covid-19 related grants, this should be included in the cash flow document.
A breakdown of costs over £1,000 (if applicable)	Online Application	This should provide detail of the individual elements that comprise a total cost of a good, service or package
Evidence of loss of income from COVID-19	Online Application	Examples may include reduced ticket sales due to prior planned activity having to be cancelled due to COVID-19, loss of sponsorship etc.
Renewal Plan	Online Application	Renewal Plans should set out how organisations will achieve recovery (including safe reopening and safe operations line with general Covid advice and restrictions, and in line with sector and venue specific Covid-safety requirements), and sustainability in the next 2 – 3 years. Plans should be change orientated and be proportionate to the size of organisations, with major venues expected to provide more detailed plans and smaller organisations submitting, short 1 -2 page plans. They should also include how you propose to minimise negative environmental impacts and promote positive ones.

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 must be PC compatible.** If non-PC compatible data is supplied, your application will not be assessed. 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.

All of the information you provide will be held on computer. This information will be used for the administration of applications and grants, for producing statistics and information on successful applicants. Remember to keep a copy of the completed form and enclosures for your own records.

ASSESSMENT AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS

ASSESSMENT

Applications will be assessed by ACNI with additional Expert Panel support selected to represent both diversity across Section 75 groups alongside expertise in academic, the creative industries including cinema, and commercial development.

Applications will be assessed against the agreed criteria in order to determine the level of financial need for immediate, recovery and renewal costs, with applications scored as Excellent, Good or Satisfactory.

Only Excellent applications will be funded immediately, with applications in the Good category potentially considered later, if sufficient budget remains.

- The Arts Council will acknowledge receipt of your application.
- If your application is not funded, the Council will provide you with reasons for this.
- If you are not happy with the way we have handled your application, you can access a copy of our complaints procedure on our website. Please note you can only complain if you believe we have not followed our published process when dealing with your application. You cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against the decision.

DECISION MAKING

- All applications will be judged on merit, regardless of any previous relationship with the Arts Council or the Department for Communities.
- We will make decisions based on your responses to the questions we ask in the application form, your organisations purpose and track record, as well as our knowledge and expertise as the development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland, or the knowledge and expertise from the relevant sectors in Northern Ireland.
- Where an applicant is an existing Arts Council Client, we will also use our knowledge of working with you,
- We will give particular attention to the evidence of financial need set out in your application.
- We will assess the quality of your request.
- We will endeavour to ensure a balance of funding across all communities in Northern Ireland as well as art form activities and disciplines.
- In promoting this programme, the Arts Council particularly welcomes applications from those referenced in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Publicity

Full listings of all the grants we award are published on our website. You will be required to acknowledge Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Department for Communities funding in all your publicity. Failure to credit the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Department for Communities will affect payment of your grant.

Openness and accountability

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 any information held by us (which will include your application) is potentially accessible by the public.

Information supplied by you will be held in manual files and on a computer-based grants management system. Reports from the information you supply and from comments made on your application by staff members and external assessors, where relevant, are also on both manual and computer-based systems. The information you supply will be made available to those assessing any grant applications you make.

By submitting your application, you waive any right to raise any type of proceedings against the Arts Council of Northern Ireland as a consequence of, or in contemplation of, any disclosure of the contents of your application in response to an information request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The nature of this fund relies on the integrity of the applications. Please ensure you answer all questions fully, clearly and honestly. If you answer a question with inaccurate information, we may need to reclaim funding at a later date or take other action if we suspect fraud.

Fraud Prevention Information collected through the application process will be shared with fraud prevention agencies who will use it to prevent fraud and money laundering and to verify identity. Further information on how your information might be used is set out in our Privacy Policy below.

Data protection

Data held on our grants management system is used for all of the following purposes: statistical reporting, application assessing, accounting purposes and for contacting you.

The details of your grant will be public information (see Openness and Accountability). However, any personal details will be held within our grants management system and our paper files, and accessed only by our staff; appointed auditors and individuals or organisations that may help us assess or monitor grants.

You have a right under the Data Protection Act 1998 to access the data held on you by Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

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.

APPLYING ONLINE

Applications to the Stability & Renewal Programme for Organisations will only be accepted online.

The online application system has been tested and is sending out relevant notification issues. We are, however, aware that some applicants to online grants programmes may experience issues such as the account holder not receiving links to reset passwords, not receiving notifications of when applications are edited and saved, nor when applications have been submitted. These issues relate to those account holders with email addresses from the following email providers – btinternet, yahoo and virgin – and customised email addresses.

The potential issues lie with those email providers and are beyond the control of Arts Council; if encountered they need to be addressed by the relevant email provider.

Should you be affected by a problem which cannot be resolved with an email provider, we would strongly recommend that accounts are set up using Gmail or Outlook email addresses. Where applicants may have previous accounts with other email addresses, we will be able to transfer historical information to new accounts if required.