



Awarding funds from  
**THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®**

# ORGANISATIONS DIGITAL EVOLUTION AWARDS

## Application Guidance Notes

Deadline for Applications	Decisions
12noon, Monday, 14 February 2022	4 April 2022

Please note: this programme is for proposals which will complete by  
**28 February 2023.**

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# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Organisations Digital Evolution Awards scheme.

These notes give information on who is eligible to apply to the programme and how to submit an application. It also describes how your application will be assessed, how long it will take, how payments will be made 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: <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org>

## AIMS OF THE ORGANISATIONS DIGITAL EVOLUTION AWARDS

Programme Objectives:

- Upskilling NI arts organisations in the use of Digital Technology
- Creation of excellent Digital Art\*

Programme Priorities:

1. Creation of digital arts
2. Supporting artists / arts organisations to make digital art for the first time or working with digital technology which they have not used before.
3. Encouraging cross-sectoral collaboration

\*What is Digital Art within the context of this programme?

For this programme digital art is artwork that is created exclusively in the digital space; it can either exist in the digital space or be translated into a physical object or tangible experience through technology. Work that exists only in the digital space can be artwork that is consumed online or offline; the latter having some form of installation in a venue.

This grant programme does not cover the simple digitisation of art (in any artform) or performance and must relate to the development of your artistic practice and digital capability. Filmed performances, audio recordings or video capture of material that would be intended for in-person performance is not suitable as the output of a project proposal, and applications applying for such output activity will be rejected as ineligible. Such filmed or recorded elements *can* be used as assets within a piece of digital art, for example within animation, virtual experiences, or app development.

# INTRODUCTION

## IS YOUR PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME SUITABLE?

This programme only relates to those proposals that will take place between **4 April 2022 and 28 February 2023**. All eligible expenditure must be incurred within these dates. If this is not the case for your proposal, you should NOT apply to this scheme as the Arts Council will not meet any costs incurred outside this period.

## HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

- The budget for the programme is £40,000.
- The maximum award value will be £10,000.

## HOW MUCH PARTNERSHIP FUNDING DO YOU NEED?

No partnership funding is required, but if your proposal cost is greater than the award value you must detail the total cost of your project and all other sources of funding in your application.

# ELIGIBILITY

## WHO CAN APPLY?

Eligible applicants to this scheme are as follows:

- Arts organisations, registered charities and other organisations which cannot distribute profits
- Groups of organisations working together to deliver specific projects
- Organisations currently in receipt of an Arts Council Annual funding Programme award may apply for:
  - projects of an exceptional nature which were not anticipated at the time of their AFP application

## WHO CANNOT APPLY?

- For-profit organisations
- Individuals or sole traders
- Broadcasters (excluding community service broadcasters)
- Central Government Departments
- Umbrella organisations not previously funded by the Arts Council

## WHAT YOU CAN APPLY FOR

Here are some examples of the type of project we are aiming to support through this scheme, this list is far from exhaustive.

- Creation of a virtual environment or augmented reality environment; such as augmented reality visual arts or sound overlay on venues or geographical spaces.
- Using technology, such as 3D rendering and printing, to create artwork digitally which can either exist digitally or be manufactured into 3D physical objects.
- Using technology to translate data into artistic content; for example algorithms that create music or visual content from data input
- App development for the delivery of artistic content; this could include gamification or making an artistic experience for consumption on digital devices. (Note: this does not include streaming of filmed / recorded performances)
- Piloting new forms of support to individual artists or organisations that results in the creation of digital art.

## WHAT YOU CAN APPLY FOR (cont)

- Essential digital equipment and software up to a max 20% of Total Request Value (ie. 20% of the total amount you are requesting from us in the application). All requests for hardware or software must be integral to project delivery and will be reviewed on a case by case basis by assessors.

Here are some examples that **would not** be considered through this scheme:

- Filmed theatrical or musical performances for online or offline distribution
- Audio recording of music or literature recitals for online or offline distribution
- Photography or filming of visual arts pieces for online or offline purposes

If you are uncertain about the eligibility of a proposal, it is encouraged that you speak to ACNI's Creative Industries Officer prior to making your application. **Applicants should give careful consideration to the feasibility and timing of their activities given possible ongoing restrictions due to COVID-19.**

## ARE COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS ELIGIBLE?

Collaborative applications with creative businesses, freelance creative industries practitioners or other arts organisations working together in **cross-discipline** projects/activities are encouraged. One application form should be used for the complete collaborative project.

Single artform collaborations are also eligible and your project may include creative industries freelancers / businesses with skills in relevant technologies to contribute towards the delivery of the project.

Collaborative projects must have a lead applicant – that is, the applicant in whose name the application is submitted and who, in the event of an award, will be the organisation responsible for managing the grant, and monitoring and reporting on the project. The lead applicant **must be based in Northern Ireland.**

## WHAT YOU CANNOT APPLY FOR

- Activities that are not arts related
- New administrative or new salaried arts posts
- Film or video production, purchase of assets for film and video, unless they are part of a piece of digital native art as detailed on page 2.

## WHAT YOU CANNOT APPLY FOR (cont)

- Activities where contracts have been entered into before we issue a letter of commencement. We do recognise that certain preliminary work needs to take place, but advertising of projects in advance of a Council decision is undertaken at the organisation's own risk.
- Capital costs over 20% of the Total Request Amount.
- Activities or events which duplicate what already exists
- Website design and upkeep
- Translations of literary works by Northern Irish artists into other languages
- Costs already covered by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, other funders or Government COVID-19 schemes to cover salaries or grants to mitigate loss during quarantine.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

If you have any queries regarding the eligibility of your proposal, please contact Matthew Malcolm. Arts Council staff are currently working remotely however can be contacted by email. Staff contact details are available on the Arts Council website - <http://artscouncil-ni.org/contact-us>.

# HOW TO APPLY

## HELP WITH YOUR APPLICATION

These Guidance Notes can be downloaded from our website here and are available on request in large print format and disk: <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org>. Please contact Patricia Curran [pcurran@artscouncil-ni.org](mailto:pcurran@artscouncil-ni.org) if you need further assistance in this regard.

## 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 Organisations Digital Evolution Awards scheme webpage here <http://artscouncil-ni.org/funding/for-organisations>.

- 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 12noon precisely on the closing date, 14 February 2022.** If your complete application is not fully uploaded when the system closes, with all the requested mandatory enclosures, 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.

## 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).



# HOW TO APPLY

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.

You **must** upload the following to your application before submission:

- Constitution and//or Memorandum and Articles of Association\*
- 2020/21 Audited/Certified/adopted accounts\*
- Management accounts for the period up to 31 October 2021 (if the accounts provided are not for 2020/21 – see additional notes below)
- Detailed Project Description
- Detailed I&E for the project
- Detailed description of how your project meets the programme criteria

\*If these documents are already available on the Government Funding Database, you do not have to upload them with your application.

**If available** and relevant to your project, you should also upload the following:

- Copies of letters of offer from partnership funders or sponsors
- CVs or information on artist/s, groups, technical staff, other personnel you propose to employ as part of the project.

# HOW TO APPLY

## 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.

Mandatory Enclosure	Upload to	Guidance on Enclosure
<b>Constitution and/or Memorandum and Articles of Association</b>	Online Application	<p>Only upload these documents to your application if not already available on the Government Funding Database. <b>(NB:</b> It is your responsibility to ensure the docs have been uploaded to the GFD, if not provided with your application.)</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Most recent set of Audited /Certified Accounts</b>	Online Application	<p>Only upload these documents to your application if not already available on the Government Funding Database. <b>(NB:</b> It is your responsibility to ensure the docs have been uploaded to the GFD, if not provided with your application.)</p> <p>Please note : if these accounts are not for 2020/21, ie up to the period 31 March 2021, you must upload a set of management accounts covering this period with your application.</p>
<b>Management Accounts up to the period 31 March 2021</b>	Online Application	<p>Applicants are required to provide a copy of their organisation's most recent Audited/Certified Accounts. If the accounts provided with the application or uploaded to the GFD are not for the year 2020/21 (ie, if your most recent audited accounts are for the 2019/20 financial year), we require a set of management accounts covering the 2020/21 financial year, up to March 2021. We require these accounts to assess the overall financial wellbeing of your organisation and to judge whether there is a need for Arts Council funding.</p>
<b>Detailed project description</b>	Online Application	<p>You should describe in detail the project you wish to deliver, describing the overall aims and objectives of the project and all the activities within the project. You should also include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed timeline for your project</li> <li>• How the final project outcome will be presented / which platform it will be presented on.</li> <li>• Locations and dates of any events within the project</li> </ul>

# HOW TO APPLY

Mandatory Enclosure	Upload to	Guidance on Enclosure
Detailed project description (cont)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Names of artists, tutors, facilitators, creative industries contractors for each event or project; OR details of the process you intend to use to select the artists / creative industries contractors.</li> <li>If relevant projected participation in each event or project – numbers and whether they will actively participate or will be an audience for a final presentation</li> <li>Name of Project Manager for each major element, along with experience statement</li> </ul>
Detailed description of how your project meets the programme criteria	Online Application	<p>The programme criteria are listed below. You must address each sub-criterion directly in no fewer than 200 and no more than 500 words. <b>You must address each sub-criterion separately; identify and number</b> your response to each so that the assessing officer can clearly see which sub-criterion you are addressing. If you do not separately address, identify and number each sub-criterion response, your enclosure will be ineligible.</p> <p><b>Criterion 1: Public Benefit</b> (500 words maximum per sub-criteria)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how your project contributes to the Arts Council's strategy<sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>Describe how your project contributes to the growth of the digital arts in the community for new and existing audiences, and how it reflects the diversity of Northern Ireland society and culture.</li> <li>Describe how your project contributes to the digital upskilling within your organisations and/or the sector.</li> </ol> <p><b>Criterion 2: Quality of Arts Activity</b> (500 words maximum per sub-criteria)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how your project offers creative vision and imaginative programming.</li> <li>Describe your project's production/performance/presentation/facilitation and process.</li> <li>Give details of the artists, facilitators, and creative industries practitioners who will be involved with your project.</li> </ol> <p><b>Criterion 3: Organisational/Project Viability and Quality of Management</b> (500 words maximum per sub-criteria)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how you have planned your project.</li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.arts-council-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-5-year-Strategic-Framework-for-Developing-the-Arts-2019-2024.pdf>

# HOW TO APPLY

Mandatory Enclosure	Upload to	Guidance on Enclosure
Detailed description of how your project meets the programme criteria (cont)		<p>8) Describe how your organisation is governed, including details of how often your board meets, reporting mechanisms, sub-committees and training.</p> <p>9) Describe how your organisation manages its finances.</p>
Detailed I&E budget for your project	Online Application	<p>This must be a detailed income and expenditure budget for the project, <b>which should indicate the requested ACNI contribution to each budget line</b>. You must include a breakdown of any budget line over £1,000 and itemize expenditure wherever possible (example “Staff time £5,000” must be broken down to give specific details of activities). You should also include details of how you have calculated any fees you are paying, e.g. hourly/daily/weekly rates. Where box office or sales are shown you should include details of pricing and numbers of tickets/publications to be sold.</p> <p>The Arts Council recognises non-monetary forms of assistance to a project, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• members of the public wishing to contribute time, experience and expertise to arts groups or organisations</li> <li>• young people wishing to contribute time but who also wish to gain work experience and or accreditation and training</li> <li>• professionals and or consultants wishing to donate their time, professional experience and expertise to organisations who would benefit from this resource</li> <li>• employers who encourage and support employees in volunteering to bring their time, knowledge and expertise to groups and organisations requiring assistance</li> <li>• free use of premises and/or equipment</li> <li>• free access to other services</li> </ul> <p>“In-kind” funding does <b>not</b> include the time given by your committee or board members to carry out their regular duties</p> <p>If you are including “in-kind” support to your project you <b>MUST</b> demonstrate how you have calculated this. The Arts Council accepts the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the equivalent of the hourly minimum wage for members of the public and young people contributing time as described above</li> <li>• a limit of £120 a day for professionals and/or consultants and employees volunteering their time</li> <li>• the costing by the supplier for the use of premises, equipment and other services</li> </ul>

# HOW TO APPLY

Mandatory Enclosure	Upload to	Guidance on Enclosure
Detailed I&E budget for your project (cont.)		<p><u>You cannot include</u> the costs of employing committee/board members or directors of the organisation to work on the project as research shows that the public regard this as inappropriate use of Lottery funds which are to be used for wider public benefit rather than private gain.</p> <p><u>You cannot include</u> the costs of hospitality or alcoholic beverages. The only hospitality costs we will pay for are where they are integral to the project, for example, an arts conference where lunch is provided to delegates.</p>
Copies of LOOs from Other Funders	Online Application	If you have any letters from sponsors or other funders you should include them with your application as demonstration of support.
Artists / Freelancer CVs	Online Application	If you know which artists and creative freelancers will be involved in your project, provide us with copies of their CVs. This will help us assess the quality of your proposal.

## AFTER YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

- The Arts Council will acknowledge receipt of the application form.
- You will receive a Monitoring Form which will be published to your application account. **You must complete and return the Monitoring Form as part of the application process. If you do not do so, your application will be ineligible and will not be assessed.**
- The application will be assessed by an Arts Development Officer.
- Officer assessments will be subject to a moderation process involving other relevant stakeholders.
- 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.

# HOW WE WILL MAKE OUR DECISION

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

We will assess your proposal against the following criteria.

<b>Public Benefit</b>	<b>Max Score</b>	<b>Assessed Against</b>
1. Describe how your project contributes to the Arts Council's strategy.	<b>5</b>	<i>Detailed Project Description and Detailed Description of How your Project Meets the Programme Criteria</i> mandatory enclosures.
2. Describe how your project contributes to the growth of the digital arts in the community for new and existing audiences, and how it reflects the diversity of Northern Ireland society and culture.	<b>5</b>	<i>Detailed Project Description and Detailed Description of How your Project Meets the Programme Criteria</i> mandatory enclosures.
3. Describe how your project contributes to the digital upskilling within your organisations and/or the sector.	<b>5</b>	<i>Detailed Project Description and Detailed Description of How your Project Meets the Programme Criteria</i> mandatory enclosures.
<b>Quality of Arts Activity</b>	<b>Max Score</b>	<b>Assessed Against</b>
4. Describe how your project offers creative vision and imaginative programming.	<b>5</b>	<i>Detailed Project Description and Detailed Description of How your Project Meets the Programme Criteria</i> mandatory enclosures.
5. Describe your project's production/performance/presentation/facilitation and process.	<b>5</b>	<i>Detailed Project Description and Detailed description of how your project meets the programme criteria</i> mandatory enclosures.
6. Give details of the artists, facilitators, and creative industries practitioners who will be involved with your project.	<b>5</b>	<i>Detailed Project Description and Detailed description of how your project meets the programme criteria and 'Artists/Freelancer CVs'</i> mandatory enclosures.
<b>Organisational/Project Viability and Quality of Management</b>	<b>Max Score</b>	<b>Assessed Against</b>
7. Describe how you have planned your project.	<b>5</b>	<i>Detailed Project Description and Detailed Description of How your Project Meets the Programme Criteria</i> mandatory enclosures.
8. Describe how your organisation is governed, including details of how often your board meets, reporting mechanisms, sub-committees and training.	<b>5</b>	<i>Detailed Description of How your Project Meets the Programme Criteria</i> mandatory enclosure.
9. Describe how your organisation manages its finances.	<b>5</b>	<i>Detailed Description of How your Project Meets the Programme Criteria, Accounts/Management Accounts</i> mandatory enclosures.

# HOW WE WILL MAKE OUR DECISION

It is very important that you think carefully about how your proposal satisfies these criteria and use the application to demonstrate this to us. Your proposal must meet all the criteria.

## THE DECISION PROCESS

Assessors will consider applications using their professional judgement, based on the information provided within the application and enclosures, knowledge of your track record (in relation to both arts activity and your previous management of any ACNI funding), knowledge of the wider arts and digital development landscape, and the competitive context in which all applications are evaluated.

Assessment recommendations are then subject to a moderation process.

## IS THE ARTS COUNCIL DECISION FINAL?

There is a review procedure, which is available on the website and will be issued to any unsuccessful applicants upon request.

# IF YOU RECEIVE AN AWARD

## LETTER OF OFFER

Following the decision, Arts Council will issue successful applicants with a contract outlining the conditions attached to the award and the specific purposes for which the award can be used.

- You will not be able to incur expenditure until you have received your letter of offer from the Arts Council. You should take this into account when planning your proposal.
- 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 proposal must be completed.
- A pre-condition of grant drawdown will be the submission of signed MOUs between any partnership organisations for awards to collaborative projects.
- **If there are any changes to your agreed project from the original application, you must inform the Arts Council immediately in writing before incurring any proposal expenditure.** 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.

## HOW PAYMENTS WILL BE MADE

Payments are normally made in stages each of which will have specific 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. Arts Council will make payments using BACS transfer only. You will need to complete and return the BACS form issued with your letter of offer.

## POST-PROJECT MONITORING

At the conclusion of your project, you will have to submit an End of Project Report and provide a final income and expenditure account for the project, in addition to evidencing the appropriate use of Arts Council and National Lottery branding throughout the course of project delivery. The project report will include

- Details of how the project has benefited you as an organisation
- An evaluation of the project – was it successful? Did you meet your targets? etc.

We may discuss with you how this information is to be collected.



## IF YOU RECEIVE AN AWARD

### POST-PROJECT MONITORING – Verification Visits

Your project may also be subject to a verification process which will ensure that the project grant has been spent in accordance with your letter of offer. It is therefore important that you retain all the project documentation to evidence this.

## OTHER INFORMATION

If you have any queries about the programme or need any help or advice completing the application, please contact Matthew Malcolm.

These Guidance Notes and the relevant application form are available on request in large print format.

The online application system has been tested and is sending out relevant notifications. 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 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 prior to application to this scheme.

Good luck with your application!