

Quality Metrics - Q&A

Q. What is Quality Metrics?

A. Quality Metrics is a sector-led metrics framework that uses self, peer and public assessment to capture the quality of arts and cultural work.

Q. How does it work?

A. The Quality Metrics are a core set of statements developed by arts and culture organisations that describe the components of quality artistic and cultural work. They are publically available and free for anyone to use. To date, the metrics have been administered through a digital platform called Culture Counts which allows organisations to collect, analyse and share self, peer and public feedback on their events, exhibitions or performances in real time and using the same scale across the sector.

Q. To what extent has the work been sector led?

A. The project has been entirely sector led; with funding support from Arts Council England linked directly to our strategy and Goal 1 in particular- excellence; with the ambition to support a sector-led project that could positively impact on the wider arts and cultural sector in England.

Q. How do Quality Metrics fit alongside the Arts Council's existing self-assessment framework and peer review practices?

A. The Quality Metrics sit alongside other ways of assessing quality, for example the Self Evaluation Framework and our Artistic & Quality Assessment programme, providing artists and organisations with another tool to help them understand and talk about the quality of their work.

Q. Where has it come from?

A. The work takes its inspiration from a project initiated in 2010 by the Department of Culture and the Arts in Western Australia, which commissioned consultants John



Knell of Intelligence Agency and Michael Chappell of Pracsys Economics to work with arts organisations to develop a system that would help them understand the public value of arts and culture.

Having heard about the work in Western Australia, Dave Moutrey (CEO of the Cornerhouse in Manchester) approached the Arts Council to ask if we would be prepared to invest some money in supporting a group of arts/cultural organisations in England to do something similar.

Q. How has the Arts Council supported development of the Quality Metrics?

A. The Arts Council has supported the development of the Quality Metrics through a series of grants.

Q. What funding has been committed to this project?

A. Cornerhouse (Greater Manchester Arts Centre Ltd), as the consortium's lead organisation, was awarded a direct grant of **£49,928** (Grant in Aid) in March 2013 to support stage one of the Manchester Metrics pilot. This facilitated development of the framework, testing of the concept, and the formulation of an initial set of metrics between April and July 2013.

Following a successful first phase, the Arts Council awarded a further **£25,000** (Grant in Aid) to the consortium in September 2013 for stage two of the Manchester Metrics pilot. This stage of the project enabled the consortium to refine the metrics and test them in practice across eight arts and cultural events / productions in the North West between November 2013 and January 2014. A report detailing the findings was published in March 2014.

Whilst delivering the second stage of the Manchester pilot, Cornerhouse submitted an application to the Big Data strand of the Digital R&D fund. The application requested funding towards a national pilot that would further develop the metrics themselves, the online platform and the technology that supports them. An award of



£300,000 was agreed by the Digital R&D fund steering board in January 2014 for a national pilot to be delivered between March 2014 and March 2015. The Digital R&D fund was funded jointly by ACE (£6m) and AHRC (£1m). NESTA also invested £1m in kind support to the fund.

In September 2015 Arts Council England gave a grant of **£300,000** to Counting What Counts Ltd, to support a diverse range of 150 National Portfolio Organisations and Major Partner Museums to test the Quality Metrics evaluation framework across three events, exhibitions or performances between November 2015 and May 2016. Counting What Counts also supported 20 organisations to further develop and test a set of participatory metrics that closely align with our CYP Quality Principles. We contracted Nordicity to complete an independent evaluation of the project. Nordicity were contracted through an invitation to tender and awarded **£29,385**.

Q. Why has the Arts Council supported development of the Quality Metrics?

A. The Quality Metrics have the potential to help organisations that we invest in to understand more about what their audiences think about the quality of their work. It will also encourage a much stronger focus on the value of data across the arts and cultural sector, support the development of peer networks and help us all understand and talk about quality in a more consistent way.

The Quality Metrics enable a large scale, standardised evidence base to be created whilst also allowing for a richer dialogue between artists, peers and the public about the quality of cultural experiences.