
–
The National Portfolio
Investment Programme

–
2018/19 – 2021/22



Guidance for applicants: Band 2

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Introduction and essential information for all applicants

This guidance covers preparing an application, as well as funding agreements, business plans and your relationship with us (the Arts Council). You should read the [**'Introduction and essential information'**](#) before reading this guidance.

Band 2 covers organisations receiving a minimum (average) of £250,000 per year and a maximum (average) of £999,999 per year. These organisations will be required to contribute to our goals 1, 2 and, where appropriate 5, and to submit plans for three years.

Preparing your application

This section sets out detailed guidance on how to prepare the content of your application. When you come to enter it on the online portal, you will need to refer to the step-by-step [Grantium guidance](#).

You will need to tell us the following;

Your organisation or consortium's mission or purpose

This can be taken from your business plan or website. You may use up to 2,000 characters¹ for this section.

The level of investment you are requesting

Please make sure you have read the [‘Introduction and essential information’](#) before reading further or starting an application.

If you are a current National Portfolio Organisation or Major Partner Museum, the level of investment included in your budget must not exceed the level of investment that has been set for 2017/18. Your responses to questions on the application form about how you will meet our goals and manage your programme of activity will be based on this budget. An opportunity to request an increased level of investment is provided separately within the application form (see below).

In **exceptional circumstances** (for organisations currently receiving National Portfolio or Major Partner Museum investment), we would be prepared to consider a higher level of investment than that set for 2017/18. However, an increase in investment would be **very unlikely**, given that we received a ‘standstill’ settlement from the Government for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20. Even if you would like to request more investment than has been agreed for 2017/18, you **must** use no more than the previously agreed 2017/18 figure as the basis of the budget included in your application. There is an opportunity within the form to specify the additional amount you want to request and to explain

¹ This includes spaces and other punctuation

how you will use it.

We expect most applicants to request the same amount in each year. However, if you intend to ask for a sum in any one year that is significantly different to the level in any other year, you should explain the reasons why in the 'Financial viability' section of the application form.

Below, we have set out a series of 'prompts' that you should think about when considering each of the relevant goals in your application. We will take these criteria into account when assessing your application. You should consider all those that are relevant to your proposed activity – you do not need to consider the prompts that do not apply.

How you plan to use our investment to contribute to goal 1

You can use up to 20,000 characters for this section. You should provide an outline proposal (rather than a detailed programme of activity) showing how you will contribute to our achievement of goal 1 during 2018/19 – 2020/21, with a brief statement on how you plan to do this in 2021/22.

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

- the artistic or cultural outcomes² (or both) of your proposal, including what you plan to do and how you will do it
- evidence that supports the quality of your work, for example brief excerpts from peer, stakeholder, audience or participant reviews³
- your assessment of changes your organisation or consortium needs to make to continue to improve quality, and what you will do to bring about these changes
- if your organisation is a museum, evidence of the quality of your collections, and your plans to develop, share and research them (using information from, for example, your Designation award, collections

² In this guidance we refer to cultural outcomes. This relates specifically to museums' activity, which relates to all types of museum organisations by subject matter, including science and industrial collections, military collections, and art galleries

³ If you have participated in the Quality Metrics pilot, you may want to include your findings, but we will consider this as we would any other piece of evidence, so that those who have been unable to participate are not at a disadvantage

- reviews and research activity)
- plans to support, produce and distribute creative content and experiences digitally (see the [‘Introduction and essential information’](#) section of this guidance for more information)
- if a main part of your programme includes working with independent artists, how you will support the development of artistic talent and how this relates to the needs of artists in your area of work. This could include:
 - offering time, space and resources to develop artistic or specialist practice
 - commissioning new work and encouraging new collaboration
 - commitment to longer-term initiatives such as mentoring or creating an accessible offer and environment to support the development of diverse artists and practice
- if appropriate, how you will aim to share your work internationally and attract audiences or work with artists from around the world

How you plan to use our investment to contribute to the Creative Case for Diversity

You can use up to 10,000 characters for this section. You should provide an outline proposal (rather than a detailed programme of activity) showing how you will contribute to the Creative Case for Diversity from 2018/19 – 2020/21, with a brief statement setting out how you plan to do this in 2021/22.

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

- how your programme or collection (or both) reflects the diversity of contemporary England
- how you make sure that diversity is an essential part of your programme of activity
- if you are applying to deliver arts activity, your plans for supporting the development of diverse artists and practitioners, and providing platforms for showing work from, and providing opportunities for, diverse artists, practitioners and other organisations

- if you are applying to deliver museums activity, how you plan to develop your collections and programmes, providing opportunities for diverse practitioners and developing partnerships with diverse organisations
- how you recruit, select and involve members from protected characteristic groups⁴ when developing and delivering your artistic or cultural programme
- how you respond to challenges and barriers facing members of protected characteristic groups in participating and engaging with the arts and cultural sector
- your plans to share best practice and continued learning around diversity to promote change in the arts and cultural sector
- how you will collect evidence, including review and feedback from peers, audiences and other stakeholders, that demonstrates your contribution to the Creative Case for Diversity

⁴ Protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty 2011 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation. As well as this list, we recognise class and socio-economic status as barriers

How you plan to use our investment to contribute to goal 2

You can use up to 20,000 characters for this section. You should provide an outline proposal (rather than a detailed programme of activity) showing how you will contribute to our achievement of goal 2 during 2018/19 – 2020/21, with a brief statement setting out how you plan to do this in 2021/22.

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

- how you show that there is a demand for your work from audiences⁵
- your plans for keeping current audiences and building new ones
- how you will increase the number and range of people who have the opportunity to experience and participate in high quality art and culture. This can include people who are 'physically' at your activity or event, or people who are participating digitally
- if relevant, your plans for touring and for distributing your work
- how you will work to make sure that more people who are currently least engaged in arts and culture are experiencing your work or collections

⁵ By audiences we mean all types of audiences, including readers, visitors, participants and viewers

- your target audiences and the types of people that your activity will be likely to reach. Reaching your audience can include both physically and digitally (for example, through live streaming)⁶
- how you will distribute your planned programme of existing art and culture **digitally**, with a focus on captured or cultural learning content (or both)
- any major current or planned development in the use of technologies to improve marketing, sales or customers' experience and feedback
- how you will make the most of opportunities to increase the depth and quality of experience among people accessing your work or collections
- your approach to collecting information about your current and potential audiences
- your approach to audience development for arts and culture as a whole and for developing shared approaches to capturing, sharing and reporting data
- your plans to work with and encourage volunteers

How you plan to use our investment to contribute to goal 5, if this applies

You can use up to 20,000 characters for this section. You should provide an outline proposal (rather than a detailed programme of activity) showing how you will contribute to our achievement of goal 5 during 2018/19 – 2020/21, with a brief statement setting out how you plan to do this in 2021/22.

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

- how you will include the **Quality Principles** across your programme
- how you will identify and meet the demands of different audiences of children and young people, including those who are less engaged, have protected characteristics, are less advantaged, or are under five years old
- how you will improve your collection of data about children and young people with protected characteristics (to include socio-economic background)

⁶ The following link provides advice on how you might identify target groups
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/participating-and-attending/culture-based-segmentation>

- how you will work with partners who can help you reach targeted groups
- how you are working in strategic partnerships, in particular how you are actively involved in [Cultural Education Partnerships](#)⁷
- how you will contribute to at least two of the three priorities for goal 5:
 - how you plan to encourage and support schools to achieve the [Artsmark Award](#)
 - how you will support children and young people to achieve the [Arts Award](#) as either a supporter or a centre⁸
 - how you will use digital technology as an effective way of:
 - reaching children and young people by developing specific creative content, captured content or cultural learning content
 - offering opportunities to children and young people to create their own content

How you plan to lead and manage your proposed programme of work

In the organisational profile section of the application form, we will look for evidence of the resilience of your organisation. For a definition of resilience, please see our [‘Introduction and essential information’](#)

You can use up to 14,000 characters for this section.

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

- whether you are clearly aware of the risks to the successful delivery of your programme and that there is evidence that you have appropriate ways of reducing these risks
- the suitability of your organisation’s management structure or governance arrangements and reporting, including details of succession planning for key officers and board members⁹
- whether your decision-making processes are effective
- evidence that you carry out regular self-evaluation, and how likely it is to be effective

young people more than once. We will expect you to become an active supporter if you do not work with the same group of children and young people more than once

⁷ Other strategic partnerships you could be involved with include Music Education Hubs (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs>), Bridge Organisations, and those within the education, youth justice or health sectors

⁸ We expect organisations to become centres if you work with the same group of children and

⁹ Throughout this guidance, by ‘board’ we mean a board of directors or trustees, or any equivalent management committee or group

- how appropriate your partnerships are and how likely they are to be effective
- evidence of clear plans to develop your organisation's sustainability and resilience
- how your board is structured or constituted (this should include information about the diversity of its members)
- your board members' skills and the suitability of these skills in relation to your organisation's mission, activity and management

For applications from **consortiums**, we will also take into account:

- how effective your structure is likely to be
- whether the role of the lead organisation (the organisation making the application) is clear
- whether collective decision-making and communication processes are clear
- the procedure for resolving disputes between partners
- appropriate levels of shared responsibility
- whether there is a clear process for collecting information from partners

- and compiling consolidated reports
- a history of the consortium, including how long the consortium has worked together and how likely it is to produce successful outcomes

How you will make sure your organisation is financially viable

You can use up to 14,000 characters for this section.

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

- whether you have a clear and credible plan to build on existing earned or contributed income or to look for new sources of income (we will be looking for an appropriate level of income from other sources)
- how you would manage if your applications for other funding programmes (for example, for large-scale capital) were not successful – tell us how you would adapt your activity
- whether you have convincing plans for how you intend to develop your resilience over the length of the next funding agreement

- an analysis of your proposal's costs and where you can save money, explaining how you have calculated costs and what steps you have taken to improve or achieve maximum efficiency
- your approach to paying artists and practitioners fairly and which industry guidelines you follow (see ['Introduction and essential information'](#) for more information)
- the quality of your financial controls, monitoring and reporting
- whether you are effective at maintaining and building reserves, including your current and target reserves levels
- your previous experience of managing large-scale grants (if you are not currently a National Portfolio Organisation or Major Partner Museum)

For applications from **consortiums**, we will also take into account:

- whether there is a clear and open financial relationship between consortium members

Activity location

You need to supply details of your activity location. Where your activity includes touring or takes place in multiple venues, you should include as much detail as you can to give an idea of the scope, scale and likely locations of your proposed activity.

Attachments

If you are **applying as an individual organisation**, you must attach with your application in the 'financial attachments' section of the form:

1. your financial statements for your previous financial year, prepared to the relevant legal standard for an organisation of your size and legal status
2. your most recent management accounts
3. your planned budget for 2017/18
4. your outline organisational budget for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, with indicative¹⁰ figures for 2021/22

¹⁰ We would expect, as a minimum, that this would show your expected balance sheet position

If you are **applying as a consortium**, you must attach with your application in the 'financial attachments' section of the form:

1. the lead organisation's financial statements for their previous financial year, prepared to the relevant legal standard for an organisation of its size and legal status
2. the lead organisation's most recent management accounts
3. the lead organisation's planned budget for 2017/18
4. the lead organisation's outline organisational budget for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, with indicative¹¹ figures for 2021/22

If you are applying as a **consortium**, you must **also** attach with your application in the 'consortium partner attachments' section of the form:

5. an outline consortium budget for 2018/19 with indicative¹² figures for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, which consolidates the joint activity proposed in your application and shows clearly how much National Portfolio investment each organisation would receive
6. each consortium partner's financial statements for their previous financial year, prepared to the relevant legal standard for an organisation of its size and legal status

¹¹ We would expect, as a minimum, that this would show your expected balance sheet position

¹² We would expect, as a minimum, that this would show your expected balance sheet position

Budgets

Your budgets should be comprehensive, appropriate and suitable for the scale and type of programme. They should take into account inflation, and the need to insure, repair or replace key assets. Value for money will be an important consideration for us when making our assessments. We expect organisations to make income from other sources and your budgets should clearly illustrate estimated income levels. We will also consider how you have planned your income and expenditure for this investment period alongside your management accounts for this current year. Please make sure that artists' fees are clearly shown in your budget.

We expect most applicants to apply for the same amount in each year. However, if you intend to apply for a sum in any one year that is significantly different to the level in any other year, you should explain the reasons why in the 'Financial viability' section of the application form.

Additional investment request

If you are a current National Portfolio Organisation or Major Partner Museum, the level of investment included in your budget must not exceed the level of investment that has been set for 2017/18¹³. Your responses to questions on the application form about how you will meet our goals and manage your programme of activity will be based on this budget. An opportunity to request an increased level of investment is provided separately within the application form (see below).

In **exceptional circumstances** (for organisations currently receiving National Portfolio or Major Partner Museum investment), we might consider an application for a higher level of investment than that set for 2017/18.

If you would like to request additional investment, you can use this section to tell us how much you are asking for per year (above your 2017/18 grant), what the additional amount would be used for and how your additional activity will be resourced and delivered.

¹³ There may be organisations applying to band 2 that have received a planning figure from us. This would be any current National Portfolio Organisation or Major Partner Museum that receives more than £1,000,000 per year and whose planning figure is less than £1,000,000 per year. These organisations should use their planning figure as the basis for their budget

You can use up to 10,000 characters for this section. You should provide an outline proposal showing what you would do if, exceptionally, you were awarded extra investment during the four year period of the funding agreement (2018/19 – 2021/22).

Any award is entirely discretionary on the part of the Arts Council but your proposal will be considered in the light of each of the goals. Additionally, we will consider whether your proposal:

- shows exciting but realistic ambition
- is clearly additional to your existing work
- adds demonstrably increased value to the communities you work with
- is needed or wanted by your audiences and/or communities
- develops your organisation's artistic or cultural programme in a meaningful and sustainable way
- strengthens your resilience and reduces your longer term grant dependency

If you were, exceptionally, awarded additional investment, it is possible that you would be awarded more than (an average of) £1,000,000 per year and your investment band may change. If this would be the case, you will want to consider how you would address the additional requirements for band 3 organisations.

The funding agreement, business plan and relationship with us

Any decision we make to offer you investment will be conditional. That is, it will depend on finalising a funding agreement and on your organisation producing a business plan.

We expect band 2 organisations that are part of the 2015-18 National Portfolio to achieve a Creative Case for Diversity rating of at least 'Met' by the end of the 2015-18 investment period. If the 2016/17 annual feedback process considers your organisation to have a Creative Case for Diversity rating of 'Not met', we may not finalise a conditional offer to the 2018/19 – 2021/22 portfolio until you have taken appropriate action to achieve a 'Met' rating. Your Relationship Manager will discuss this action and its timescale with you.

When we have made a conditional offer of investment, we need to see how the proposals set out in your application (on the basis of which we decided to make a conditional offer) are reflected in your business plan, taking the level of investment offered into account. In your business plan you should also clearly show how you will contribute to achieving our goals, as identified in our strategy, [Great Art and Culture for Everyone](#).

If the amount we offer differs significantly from the amount you have asked for, one of our Relationship Managers will discuss changes to your plans with you.

If the amount offered differs significantly from the amount you have asked for, one of our Relationship Managers will discuss changes to your plans with you.

You need to submit a first draft of your business plan to us by 15 October 2017, so that we can review and comment on it. Your final plans must be submitted by 31 January 2018. We will finalise and issue funding agreements by March 2018.

We have commissioned [guidance](#) to help organisations use good practice in business planning to help all organisations develop robust business plans. We would strongly encourage all organisations to read this guidance. We expect all organisations to use good practice when reporting and monitoring, as this will help you to track your progress in meeting your own objectives and in contributing to our goals.

Band 2 organisations will need to submit a three-year business plan, with a brief statement about plans for year four of the investment period (2021/22). The business plan must include SMART¹⁴ objectives for the following:

- the core programme
- contribution to the Creative Case for Diversity
- if a main part of your programme includes working with independent artists, plans for developing artists

- international activity (where appropriate)
- if contributing to goal 5, at least two of the three goal 5 priorities (Artsmark, Arts Award or digital), as well as Quality Principles, strategic partnership working and the Cultural Education Challenge

You must also provide, within your business plan or as appendices:

- a digital policy and plan for how you will use digital technologies to meet our goals and priorities for creative media during the investment period (see [‘Introduction and essential information’](#) and the [Digital policy and plan guidelines](#))
- an audience and engagement plan which covers at least two of the following goal 2 outcomes:
 - more people have the opportunity to experience and participate in great art, museums and libraries
 - the number and range of people experiencing great art, museums and libraries has increased
 - engagement levels have increased among those currently least engaged in arts and culture

¹⁴ SMART objectives are: specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-based (see business planning guidance for more information)

- you can demonstrate an increase in the depth and quality of people's cultural experiences
- where appropriate, an agreed touring plan for at least the first year, showing whether the proposed work is new or a remount, its scale, and the minimum number of dates – this should be updated in refreshed business plans submitted annually
- an equality action plan, including showing how you will:
 - make sure that your board:
 - has the necessary skills and experiences to meet your aims around diversity
 - by December 2021, reflects the diversity of the audiences and communities you are working with and working to reach, including membership from protected characteristic groups (for example, ethnicity, disability and gender and across socio-economic backgrounds). You and your Relationship Manager will decide together what your diversity objectives will be
 - plan to diversify your workforce

SMART objectives must be included in each of these plans.

You must also provide a risk register within your business plan.

You may want to make it clear within your business plan which of your SMART objectives helps us to achieve the goals set out in our 10-year strategy, [Great Art and Culture for Everyone](#).

The funding agreement will also include conditions that set out our monitoring, reporting and delivery requirements for the investment period, including:

- recognising that we use external assessors to review samples of your work and report on its quality (assessors are recruited by open application and serve fixed terms)
- using a specific quality evaluation framework to improve your understanding of how well your intentions for your work aligns with the perceptions of your public and peers, as well as supporting this programme by providing peer reviews. This will include sharing data with us

- having a Creative Case for Diversity rating of ‘Strong’ by October 2021
- using a specific tool for collecting, sharing and reporting of data¹⁵ about audiences (this will include sharing information with us)
- developing an in-depth knowledge of your audiences, using audience segmentation tools¹⁶
- where relevant, having data-sharing agreements in place with other organisations we invest in and introducing or maintaining an ‘opt-in’ option to allow customers’ data to be shared with visiting or other partner organisations
- providing an environmental policy and action plan
- collecting and submitting data relating to improving environmental performance and reducing carbon emissions
- making sure artists, practitioners and those who work in the creative industries and heritage organisations are properly and fairly paid
- submitting management accounts and cash flow statements every three months (we may ask organisations rated as being at major risk to submit information more often)
- submitting board papers every three months
- submitting an annual survey with statistics on your organisation and the

previous year’s activity (this should include further information about your audience profile, particularly gender, age, ethnicity, disability and long-standing illness)

- submitting a detailed annual report on the progress you are making against goals-related SMART objectives in your business plan and other plans
- providing a refreshed business plan each year that sets out the planned activity for the rest of the investment period. This should include a budget, cash flow, and any other information we might ask for from time to time
- acknowledging that we have a right to attend board meetings as an observer
- making sure that we have the opportunity to be involved when you recruit for senior appointments (including directors and trustees) – for example, commenting on job descriptions, being involved in shortlisting, observing on interview panels, and taking part in succession planning

We may also negotiate other, specific conditions with organisations in band 2, for example any further requirements that are linked to the level of investment we offer.

¹⁵ It may not be appropriate for your organisation to use this tool. We will consider exemptions individually

¹⁶ If you don’t already have these, you can consider using the Audience Spectrum segments (<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-spectrum>) You must use this information effectively to support your targets and strategies for audience development within your business plan

Band 2 organisations will have a minimum of two formal direct contacts with one of our Relationship Managers each year and must be willing to accept constructive feedback as a way of helping them to improve. One of these meetings will include a formal review of your progress against the SMART objectives set out in your business plan. We may increase the level of formal contact we have with you if your organisation is assessed as being at moderate or major risk.

We expect organisations will still have ongoing informal 'development' contact with Relationship Managers. This will take many forms and will be based on proposed artistic, cultural and business developments, as well as challenges, as we move through the four-year investment period.

Keeping to the terms and conditions of the funding agreement

The funding agreement between us and your organisation sets out the investment you will receive for each year of the agreement.

The funding agreement contains your business plan, including your own objectives, setting out how you will support achieving the goals in our 10-year strategy, [Great Art and Culture for Everyone](#).

The funding agreement also contains our standard terms and conditions, including the requirement that you meet the expectations for your band.

If your organisation is not meeting the requirements set out in the funding agreement, our first step will be to give you appropriate feedback (usually through the Relationship Manager) 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 the funding agreement.

There are two specific conditions within the funding agreement where we will take prescribed action:

- Creative Case for Diversity: (for current National Portfolio Organisations) if the 2016/17 annual feedback process considers your organisation to have a Creative Case for Diversity rating of 'Not met', we may not finalise a conditional offer to the 2018/19 – 2021/22 portfolio until you have taken the appropriate action to achieve a 'Met' rating
 - collecting and reporting on audience data, and data-sharing agreements: unless your organisation is exempt from these conditions, if you fail to sign up to the prescribed data-reporting service and principles or enter into data-sharing agreements with other organisations we invest in, we will withhold payments until you do so
-

We will take action if you break any of the terms and conditions of the funding agreement.

If your organisation breaks either of the terms mentioned above, or any other terms of the funding agreement, we may take further action in addition to the feedback and discussion outlined above (which would always be a first-stage measure). Measures might include:

- action plans: we may ask for and agree an action plan for improvement in response to concerns. Within this plan you might want to consider changing your key officers, both executive and non-executive. You will be responsible for this plan and we will monitor its effect
- increased monitoring and reporting: we may ask that your executive officers or chair (or both) meet with our senior officers to confirm that areas of concern we identified are being dealt with, for instance if requirements relating to goals are not being met. We may also ask for reports in writing more frequently on certain issues
- strategic funds: if we have not received and agreed clear and credible plans to deal with issues, we will make your organisation ineligible for any new application to strategic funds (including capital)
- payment conditions: we may place extra conditions on our grant payments if you have not met the terms and conditions set out in the funding agreement
- consultants: we may ask consultants to provide us with detailed information on areas of concern. This may be because we need more information, because we need specialist input, and/or because we want to support you to develop and improve

- stakeholder review: we may hold a joint review meeting with other investment partners and discuss areas that can be improved or developed
- withholding payment: if your organisation has not met the conditions of our funding agreement within an appropriate period, we may decide to withhold payment of a grant instalment (or part of a payment) until you have met the conditions
- withdrawing investment: in extreme cases, where you have broken the terms and conditions of the funding agreement over a significant period, we may decide that continued investment is not a proper use of public funds, and will discontinue it. We would take into account the evidence available, interventions we have made and the progress you have made against your action plan
- repayment: in cases where you have clearly continued to not keep to the terms and conditions, we may ask you to repay our investment

If we decide to do any of the above we will tell you beforehand. **We will take appropriate action if your organisation breaks the terms and conditions of the funding agreement (which includes your business plan and objectives).** We will take one or more of the measures outlined above in all cases.



QUESTIONS? GET IN TOUCH — WE'RE HAPPY TO HELP

Reach our Customer Services team here:

Telephone	0161 934 4317
Email	enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk
—	
Web	artscouncil.org.uk/welcome
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