

Major partner museum grants programme 2015/16–2017/18

Guidance for applicants

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION	3
Welcome	3
Spending review.....	3
Other sources of funding	3
Local enterprise partnerships (LEPS).....	5
Consortia	6
Bridge organisations	6
Contact us.....	7
Access support	7
SECTION TWO: OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR MAJOR PARTNER MUSEUMS	8
Strategic framework.....	8
Fair pay, equality and diversity.....	8
Organisational resilience.....	10
Working with a relationship manager.....	10
Our goals and Major partner museums.....	12
SECTION THREE: HOW TO APPLY	14
Four steps to applying for funding.....	14
Who can apply.....	15
Who cannot apply	16
When you can apply	17
How much you should apply for.....	17
When you will know	18
How we make our decision	18
Who will make the decision?	19
SECTION FOUR: PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION	20
What your application must include.....	20
Organisational profile	25

Attachments	26
Budgets.....	27
Budget modelling.....	27
SECTION FIVE: OUR ASSESSMENT PROMPTS.....	29
Prompts: Contributing to goal 1	29
Prompts: Contributing to goal 2	30
Prompts: Contributing to goal 3	31
Prompts: Contributing to goal 4	31
Prompts: Contributing to goal 5	32
Prompts: How will you effectively lead and manage the programme of work that you propose?	33
Prompts: How will you ensure financial viability?	34
SECTION SIX: BALANCING THE PORTFOLIO	35
SECTION SEVEN: FINALISING THE FUNDING OFFER.....	36
SECTION EIGHT: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE	37
SECTION NINE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT	37

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in Arts Council England's Major partner museum programme 2015/16 to 2017/18.

This guidance should give you all the information you need to make an application. Please read it carefully before you fill in the online application form.

Spending review

This Major partner museum programme will provide funding from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018. In July our settlement from government for 2015/16 was announced: this represents a 5 per cent real cut to our grant-in-aid. Like all public bodies, we do not know the level of grant-in-aid we will receive in 2016/17 and 2017/18 and it is unlikely we will know this until after the next general election. This will take place no later than May 2015.

We have decided nevertheless to invite applications for three years of Major partner museum funding.

We have made prudent assumptions about future levels of grant-in-aid, but applicants should be aware that if offered funding, the amount for 2016/17 and 2017/18 may have to be varied when we receive our settlement for these two years.

For guidance on how much you should apply for, and what you can expect to receive, please see section three, [How much you should apply for](#).

Organisations currently receiving Major partner museum funding should be aware that they are most unlikely to receive more than they received in 2014/15, taking into account any reduction that is passed on subsequent to the Chancellor's autumn budget statement of 2013.

It is likely that there will be good applications, including from existing Major partner museums, that we will be unable to fund. You should think about what you would do if we cannot award your organisation funding.

Other sources of funding

Arts Council England is not the main funder of regional museums in England. The principal sources of funding will remain the local authorities, independent charities, higher education bodies and other sources that currently support the sector.

However, through the museums programme the Arts Council wishes to enter into strategic partnerships with funders to help deliver a shared vision and drive some long term positive outcomes for public benefit and the sector as a whole.

Through the Major partner museum grants programme, and in partnership with other funders including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England will build a network of leading museums able to consolidate the success of the programme to date while working to achieve transformational change for the future.

The Major partner museum programme is one of a package of funding programmes and core services (including the Accreditation and Designation schemes) for museums. In addition to the major partner museum programme, we will support museums through other funding programmes, which will include the Museum development fund, an open fund for museums and targeted strategic funding.

Details about these programmes will be available on our website, with further details on some funds to be announced later in the year. Major partner museums may be eligible to apply for funds from other strategic programmes that Arts Council England may develop over the 2015–18 period.

Please note that organisations in receipt of Major partner museum funding will not be eligible to apply to the open fund for museums (currently the Strategic support fund). Current Major partner museums that are unsuccessful in their bid for continued Major partner museum funding, or decide not to apply, will be able to apply to the open fund for activity that starts after 1 April 2015.

Organisations will be able to apply to both the Major partner museum programme and to the Museum development fund to deliver museum development across a geographical area. The Museum development fund will launch in April 2014. Further details will be made available on our website. Major partner museums will also continue to be eligible to apply for Designation development funding. However, as they will be eligible for Major partner museum status *because* of their Designated collection/s, we expect to see ambitions for the Designated collection articulated clearly within the Major partner museum bid. Any applications for Designation development funding will be scrutinised for additionality and leadership in their subject area.

All museums will continue to be eligible to apply to the Grants for the arts programme for arts activity if they are otherwise eligible for this programme.

There may be a very small number of Major partner museum applicants that also wish to apply for National portfolio organisation funding for arts activity which meets

the specific criteria set out in the National portfolio organisation funding application guidance. In these cases each application **must clearly**:

- support distinctly different activity (ie you cannot apply twice for the same activity)
- demonstrate how different forms of Arts Council England funding would be used to cover different costs. Use your attached budgets for 2015–18 and narrative within the ‘Organisational profile’ section of the forms to clearly show how duplication of funding is avoided
- demonstrate how you would continue to deliver Major partner museum activity if your application for National portfolio organisation funding is unsuccessful, and vice versa. Please use the ‘Organisational profile’ section of each application form to address this risk

There may be some Major partner museum applicants that are awaiting a decision from Arts Council England on concurrent bids for small scale or large scale capital funding. These applicants should plan what they would do if their bids for capital funding are either successful or unsuccessful and consider the implications for their Major partner museum applications. Major partner museum proposals and attached budgets may be based upon the scenario that the bid for capital funding is successful, but this should not be interpreted as a commitment on our part to fund any capital bid.

Within the ‘Organisational profile’ section of the application form applicants must clearly address the risk that their capital funding bid is unsuccessful, providing a very brief outline of how they would adapt plans.

During the funding agreement negotiation stage, we will take into account the outcome of bids for capital funding. This may result in a change in the level of funding offered for your Major partner museum application and agreed changes to your proposal.

Local enterprise partnerships (LEPS)

Arts Council England recognises the role the arts and cultural sector plays in helping drive local economic growth. To facilitate long term partnership between Major partner museums and local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) the Arts Council will make its regular funding eligible as match for LEPs’ European Structural and Investment Fund allocations in the period 2015–18, subject to managing authority approval. This will create an opportunity to lever funding into the sector to enable it to contribute to local economic priorities. Further detail on how European Structural and Investment Funds will operate in the period 2014–20 can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-strategies-supplementary-guidance-to-local-enterprise-partnerships.

Consortia

We will accept applications for funding from organisations working as a consortium. One organisation must act as the lead organisation and submit the application. All partners within the consortium must show a firm commitment to joint working. Your application must show the benefits and rationale of working as a consortium.

The lead organisation will be solely accountable for managing the application and any grant that is awarded. When making a decision on your application, we will take into account the governance, management, financial management and viability of partner organisations, as well as the lead organisation. If you are successful, we will need to approve your written agreement with your partners before it is signed.

Bridge organisations

To help ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, we will fund a small number of 'Bridge' organisations within the National portfolio and our Major partner museums. Their role is to provide an environment in which cultural education can flourish both in and out of school.

Bridge organisations are primarily facilitators and are not expected to directly deliver arts and cultural opportunities for children and young people, although an organisation may undertake wider education and learning work through its core business.

The Bridge role may be undertaken by a museum, an arts organisation or an arts education agency.

Specific criteria apply to Bridge applications. You must have a preliminary conversation with us before applying for Bridge funding. You should contact the Customer Services team who will direct you to an appropriate senior relationship manager at Arts Council England.

If you do apply for Bridge funding you must use the online Bridge application form to apply, addressing the Bridge criteria and application guidance set out in Annex A of the National portfolio application pack.

You may wish to apply for funding to support both a delivery role as a Major partner museum and a partnership brokerage role as a Bridge organisation, in which case you should use the Major partner museum application form to apply for Major partner museum funding and a separate Bridge application form for Bridge funding.

Contact us

We strongly recommend that you contact us before making an application. We can help explain criteria and give you information on our range of published funding programmes. We cannot provide comment on draft applications, plans or proposals.

If you currently receive Major partner museum funding from Arts Council England, or already have a working relationship with a member of staff within one of our regional offices, you can speak to your main contact. If you don't know who to speak to, please contact our Customer Services team.

If you decide to make an application, we wish you every success.

Access support

We are committed to being open and accessible to everyone. We realise some applicants may encounter obstacles while making a grant application or accessing our services.

If you experience or anticipate any problem within the application process or require help to make an application or to access services and information, please contact our Customer Services team and we will agree what we can do to help on a flexible and individual basis.

Please also contact the Customer Services team if you need the application pack in another format.

How to contact the Customer Services team

Phone: 0845 300 6200

Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

Textphone: 020 7973 6564

SECTION TWO: OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR MAJOR PARTNER MUSEUMS

Strategic framework

Arts Council England works to create the conditions in which art and culture can thrive and engage the widest public possible. We do this through advocacy and partnership, development and investment.

On 30 October 2013 Arts Council England published a [refreshed 10-year strategy](#). *Great art and culture for everyone* updates our strategic framework for the arts, libraries and museums, which were formerly set out in separate documents: *Achieving great art for everyone* (2010) and *Culture, knowledge and understanding* (2011).

Great art and culture for everyone builds on the ambitions of its predecessors, setting out our continuing commitment to our mission and our five goals. The goals have been refreshed to incorporate our new areas of responsibility and have been streamlined and simplified. The strategic framework includes success measures, providing a clearer account of how we intend to measure our progress.

We strongly recommend all applicants read *Great art and culture for everyone*. Applications for Major partner museum funding will be assessed in relation to the mission and goals in our strategy, so it is very important that you think how your organisation relates to this strategy and what it will do to advance it.

Fair pay, equality and diversity

Arts Council England is a publically funded and accountable organisation and we have a duty to ensure that our funds are invested prudently, that organisations are well-run and that the work we support observes legal standards on pay and equality.

Arts Council England is committed to ensuring proper and fair payment those who work in the cultural sector. We require organisations receiving funding from Arts Council England to ensure that salaries, fees and subsistence arrangements are as good as or better than those agreed by any relevant trade unions and employers' associations.

However, we recognise that there is great value in people having access to work experience where it is offered and arranged properly and is a mutually beneficial arrangement, but this should not be used as a means of attempting to circumvent the Minimum wage regulations.

Similarly, we understand the importance of the voluntary sector to our Major partner museums; volunteers make an essential contribution to our cultural life. The relationship between a cultural organisation and its volunteers should be mutually beneficial: volunteers should be respected, adequately trained, and should not feel compelled to assume responsibilities that are beyond their reach or experience.

We have published guidelines to help clarify the legal obligations of arts organisations offering internships here:

www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/internships-arts

For general information about the use of volunteers, including legal obligations you might have, please visit the [Museums Association website](#).

Arts Council England observes the public sector Equality Duty 2011 and the protected characteristics as defined in the [Equality Act 2010](#). We are also committed to promoting equality across differing socio-economic groups.

Applicants for Major museum partner status that proceed successfully to the stage where a funding agreement is negotiated will be expected to submit a three-year equality action plan at the same time as they submit their three-year business plan (see [Section seven: finalising the funding offer](#)).

We expect that applicants will not only observe minimum legal standards but will demonstrate a willingness to set high standards of practice. In particular, we wish to see how applicants' obligation to promote organisational equality is complemented by a commitment to diversity in their work.

We believe that our national diversity is one of our great resources and we expect the work that we fund will reflect this and will be alive to the opportunities that diversity offers.

By diversity we mean the multitude of ethnicities, faiths and socio-economic classes that make up modern England. Our concept of diversity includes disabled people, older people and people of all sexual orientations. The geography of diversity spans England's regions, from the most rural to the inner city.

Our national diversity offers new opportunities for collaboration, from creative partnerships to sources of revenue, and is an important factor in promoting long-term organisational resilience.

Organisational resilience

All successful applicants will be expected to demonstrate their resilience. Resilience is the vision and capacity of organisations to anticipate and adapt to economic, environmental and social change by seizing opportunities, identifying and mitigating risks, and deploying resources effectively in order to continue delivering quality work in line with their mission.

This includes thinking about and planning for your own organisational performance, your financial and environmental sustainability, the skills of your workforce, as well as equality and diversity.

As part of this application process we will carry out a risk assessment of each applicant's capacity for effective management, governance, leadership and financial viability.

During the funding agreement negotiating stage, which will take place between July 2014 and February 2015, applicants that have successfully progressed to a funding offer will have to provide a clear business plan setting out how their organisations will strengthen their resilience. We will also require clear plans for equality and environmental sustainability. Go to our website for more information about [our environmental programme](#).

In the current economic climate, we are particularly keen to improve the resilience of Major partner museums.

The best applications will show their capacity for a demonstrable improvement in resilience between 2015 and 2018.

Applicants must show how they can play a strong leadership role in the wider museums sector, promoting excellence across the sector. This leadership role may be in your geographical area, or may be in an area of expertise that has national relevance. Your leadership may also relate to the resilience of other museums. Leadership may include being a provider of museum development, but Major partner museums should provide wider forms of leadership.

Working with a relationship manager

Successful applicants will be expected to work within Arts Council England's relationship management framework and fulfil specific monitoring and data reporting requirements so that we can track the progress of our investment programmes and strategies and show stakeholders the value of what we do.

You can read more about the current relationship management framework on our website: www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/relationship-between-arts-council-and-funded-organisations. We reserve the right to make changes to this document, which will be refreshed for the 2015–18 period.

The following list is not exhaustive, but gives a feel for what we will expect if your application is successful:

You will:

- have direct contact with an Arts Council England museums relationship manager on at least a quarterly basis and be receptive to constructive feedback as a tool for continuous improvement
- provide an annual report that includes both statistical data and qualitative written evidence reflecting the previous year's activity and achievements, including your leadership activity, as well as progress on key outcomes within the funding agreement
- have clear plans that are implemented for addressing equality and environmental sustainability. Go to our website for more information about [our environmental programme](#)
- on an annual basis provide a detailed plan of activity for the financial year and the accompanying budget and cash flow and any other information we might request from time to time
- contribute to developing a bigger and more informed audience for arts and culture as a whole, making the arts more accessible and raising the public appetite for art and culture. Collaboration will be central to your approach, working with other partners that share this ambition
- develop strong knowledge of your audiences, using audience segmentation tools. If you don't already have these, you can use our [13 audience segments](#). You will make effective use of this data to inform targets and strategies for audience development within your business plan
- be committed to sharing approaches (across arts and museums) to the capture of audience data, reporting and sharing, using industry standards for capture, sharing, reporting and audience analytics (for more information go to audiencefinder.org)
- support Arts Award and Artsmark and engage with the Bridge organisations
- ensure statutory health and safety and safeguarding regulations are adhered to and proper and fair payment is made to those who work in the cultural sector. Please see our current [guidance on safeguarding](#)

For consortia, the monitoring relationship will be between Arts Council England relationship managers and the lead organisation only. However, we will ask the lead organisation to provide financial information from all partner organisations on at least

an annual basis, and we may require the lead organisation to put in place with its partners more frequent monitoring of the partner organisations, dependent on the level of risk to successful delivery, under the terms of the funding agreement.

Our goals and Major partner museums

All of our investment will be relevant to our strategic framework, *Great art and culture for everyone*. This describes our mission and five goals by which we will achieve it.

Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 2: Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 3: The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable

Goal 4: The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled

Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

All applicants to the Major partner museum programme should demonstrate how they are currently meeting our five goals and how further investment will help them achieve excellence in at least two of them.

Goals 1 and 2 describe our core mission: we want excellent culture to thrive, and we want as many people as possible to engage with it.

Major partner museums must demonstrate how they are sharing their work with as large and wide an audience as possible, including those who are currently least-engaged with arts and culture.

As part of fulfilling these goals we want to ensure that children and young people experience and participate in art and culture and can continue their engagement throughout their lives. This is the objective of goal 5.

Goals 1, 2 and 5 are built on the foundations of goals 3 and 4. Goals 3 and 4 are about organisational or sector-led improvements; achieving them supports us in achieving our overall mission. We want the models of cultural provision to be financially and environmentally sustainable, and we want an appropriately skilled workforce that is truly diverse and reflects contemporary England.

Bridge organisations will be expected to make specific contributions to goals 1, 2 and 5. For more information about Bridge criteria, please refer to the Bridge annex in the National portfolio organisation guidance.

Turning our ten-year strategy into action



SECTION THREE: HOW TO APPLY

Four steps to applying for funding

There are four steps to applying for funding for the Major partner museum grants programme:

1. Read this guidance carefully and contact us

It gives you information on how to apply for funding, and answers some common questions. We also strongly recommend that you contact either your relationship manager or our Customer Services team before making an application.

2. Fill in the online application form

You must apply online at our website (www.artscouncil.org.uk). Printed applications will not be accepted. If you have difficulty applying online please contact our Customer Services team who can advise on accessible formats of guidance and ways of applying.

Use the online application to tell us about your organisation, how you plan to contribute to our goals, how you will effectively manage the programme of work that you propose, how you will demonstrate leadership, and your capacity for financial viability.

The form also asks for information that we may use to report to government or to monitor the profiles of people who receive funding. We will not use this information to assess your application.

3. Provide only the information we have asked for

You must attach the required financial documents as specified in section four, [Attachments](#). For consortia, this should include the additional information also specified in section four. We will not consider any additional information you send after you have submitted your application unless we have specifically asked for it.

4. Complete your application online at www.artscouncil.org.uk

Once you have registered online you can start your application, save your work and come back at any time to complete it. Applications must be submitted no later than 12 noon on Monday 17 March 2014. Applications submitted after this time will not be considered.

Who can apply

To be eligible for funding, you must meet the following criteria:

1. You must be able to make a major contribution towards delivering our overall strategy for the sector as detailed in the five goals of *Great art and culture for everyone*. It is expected that you will demonstrate to us how you are currently meeting our five goals and how further investment will help you achieve excellence in at least two of them. We particularly welcome applications that demonstrate how you will achieve excellence in your organisation's resilience. (There is information on our goals in section three of this guidance. You can also read our 10-year strategic framework for the arts and culture at www.artscouncil.org.uk).
2. You must be able to play a strong leadership role to the benefit of the wider museums sector. This leadership role may be in your region, or may be in an area of expertise that has national relevance.
3. You must be a single museum or museums service, or a small cluster (consortium) of linked services in a formal partnership. You might be, or include, a local authority, university or independent museum. All partners in a consortium must be committed to a meaningful and appropriate governance structure and show a firm commitment to joint working. The partners in a consortium should be closely linked geographically or through complementary services or collections, and your application must show the benefits and rationale of working as a partnership. One organisation must act as the lead organisation and submit the application. See section one, [Consortia](#).
4. All applicants must be accredited including each partner applying within a consortium. We will only accept applicants with the full or provisional Accreditation award. Applicants who are currently working towards the Accreditation award will not be eligible.
5. You must have significant multi-themed collections, at least part of which should be Designated. If you are applying as a consortium at least one museum (not necessarily the lead museum) must have at least part of its collection Designated, and the museums must between them have multi-themed collections.
6. You must have a demonstrable track record in research and scholarship and collections development.

7. You must have a minimum visitor attendance of 150,000 per year and a strong track record of delivering services to the public. If applying as a consortium the combined visitor attendance must be a minimum of 150,000 per year.
8. The museum, or consortium, must be able to demonstrate resilience and there must be a meaningful relationship between the amount of funding you are requesting and the museum's turnover. For example, we would not normally expect to be contributing more than 30 per cent of the museum's (or consortium's) overall annual budget.
9. The museum must demonstrate a firm track record in strong, stable and effective governance, management, leadership and partnership development, including cross-cultural partnerships.
10. You must be based in England.
11. Applicants (or all individual members of a consortium) must be properly constituted as an organisation. The kinds of organisations that are eligible to apply include:
 - limited companies registered at Companies House (including individuals trading as a limited company)
 - charitable incorporated organisations
 - charities or Trusts registered with the Charity Commission
 - limited liability partnerships registered at Companies House
 - partnerships established under a Deed of Partnership
 - industrial and provident societies or community benefit societies subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority
 - Royal Charter companies
 - statutory bodies including local authorities
12. You must apply for three years of funding and a minimum annual award of £500,000.

Who cannot apply

You cannot apply if:

1. You do not have a registered address within the United Kingdom.
2. You are an individual, unless you are applying as a director of your own company. **We will not accept applications from people applying in a purely personal capacity.**

3. You are not an Accredited museum.
4. You are applying for funding for activities that do not mainly benefit audiences in England.
5. You are a national museum, either individually or as part of a consortium. National museums that are currently funded directly by DCMS but will not be after 1 April 2015 are eligible to apply.
6. You are applying for funding for activities that are aimed at making a profit to be distributed to members or shareholders.
7. You plan to apply both as a single organisation and as part of a consortium.

When you can apply

We will accept applications for the Major partner museum grants programme from **Tuesday 7 January 2014**.

Applications must be submitted by **12 noon on Monday 17 March 2014**.

How much you should apply for

The *minimum* annual amount you can apply for is £500,000.

You will be applying for three years' funding and the online application asks you to say how much funding you are applying for in each of the three financial years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Our settlement from government for 2015/16 was announced in July and represents a 5 per cent real cut (3.25 per cent cash cut) to our grant-in-aid.

You can decide what you think is an appropriate sum to apply for. However, if you are currently a Major partner museum, you should consider that we do not expect to be funding most successful applicants more than they receive in 2014/15, taking into account any reduction subsequent to the Chancellor's autumn statement of 2013.

Some applicants may find that their grant remains the same; some may find it is reduced. We may be unable to fund some organisations.

In exceptional circumstances we may consider uplifts to funding where the scale of ambition increases proportionately and if there is evidence that our additional investment will lever additional match funding. If you decide to apply

for more money, make sure your plans are scalable so we can see the impact of lower levels of funding.

If you are awarded more money, other applicants will receive less.

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.

We would not normally expect to be contributing more than 30 per cent of the museum's (or consortium's) overall annual budget. **Remember that if your application is successful, you will not be able to apply to the open fund for museums.**

When you will know

We will tell you by **1 July 2014** whether you have been successful and how much funding we are offering for 2015/16, with an indicative amount for the 2016–18 funding period, pending confirmation of our settlement from government.

Any offer of funding will be conditional on the provision of a satisfactory business plan that covers the 2015–18 funding period. For more information, see [Section seven: finalising the funding offer](#).

How we make our decision

When we receive your application we will first check whether it is eligible. All eligible applications will then be considered against our criteria. We will make an assessment of the quality of the application itself, taking into account the nature of your organisation and the amount of funding applied for. We will look at the organisation/consortium and the programme proposed against the following criteria:

1. How you are currently meeting our five goals and how further investment will help you achieve excellence in at least two of them.
2. An assessment of your plans for area or national leadership.
3. We will also make an assessment of the risk associated with your application to see if there are any weaknesses and threats to your capacity:
 - to lead and manage effectively the programme of work that you propose
 - for financial viability

4. If your application is successful, we will use the risk assessment as a basis for tailoring a monitoring plan.
5. If your application is successful, we will expect you to have or develop a business plan that relates to good financial management, workforce skills, environmental sustainability and equality and diversity. Please see [Section two: our expectations for Major partner museums](#) for further information.
6. We expect to work more closely with applicants with high-risk ratings to develop a robust business plan during the funding agreement negotiation stage. For more information see [Section seven: finalising the funding offer](#).
7. We will make our assessments on the basis of the information you provide in your application, our knowledge of your organisation, if applicable, and any further information that we have specifically requested you provide.
8. Assessors may also refer to existing documentation about museums held by Arts Council England, for example information on Accreditation and Designation.
9. Our assessors will use 'prompts': that is, questions our assessors ask themselves about the applications to help identify key issues. These prompts are set out in section four of this guidance. It is important to note that not all the prompts are relevant to all applications, and they should not be read as a 'check list' for applicants.

Who will make the decision?

Final decisions on grants will be made by Arts Council England. The decision-making process will be supported by an advisory group, which will include museum sector representatives.

SECTION FOUR: PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

What your application must include

- the online application form
- additional information we have requested (to be submitted in electronic format). Please note that the total combined size of your documents must not exceed 10 MB within the additional attachment section of the form

The application form asks you to provide:

1. Your organisation or consortium's mission or statement of purpose

This can be taken from your business plan, or a previous funding agreement with us. There is a limit of 100 words for this section. If applying as a consortium each organisation must provide their individual organisation's mission or purpose as an attachment in the additional attachments section within the form.

2. How much you are applying for each year 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18

Please make sure you have read section one, [Spending review](#), and section three, [How much you should apply for](#).

We expect most applicants to apply for the same amount each year. 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.

3. How you will contribute to goal 1

There is a limit of 2,000 words for this section. You should provide concise evidence within the narrative to tell us how you currently contribute to goal 1 and, if relevant, how you plan to achieve excellence in this goal during 2015–18. Tell us about:

- a) The quality of the collection – tell us about the collection, its quality and significance, and your plans for developing it, including through acquisitions, loans, disposals, research and collections management. This should include clearly articulated ambitions for your Designated collection/s.
- b) The use of the collection – how do you plan to highlight the collection through exhibitions, longer-term galleries and public programmes? Tell us how your programmes demonstrate genuine ambition, talent and skill. How will you engage and inspire visitors and users, expanding their horizons and exploring new ideas?

- c) Research and scholarship – show how the museum (or consortium) will take an active role promoting strong critical debate and seek to increase knowledge, how you are working across the sector and in wider partnerships including international working.
- d) Standards – describe how the museum (or consortium) utilises and contributes to best practice in the care and conservation of its collections.
- e) Diversity – in what ways does your work/collection reflect the diversity of contemporary England?
- f) International – how will you seek to export your work internationally and promote international exchange? How will this add value to your programmes and audience experience?
- g) Leadership – tell us if, and how, any of these areas are reflected in your plans for leadership, either in your area or nationally.

4. How you will contribute to goal 2

There is a limit of 2,000 words for this section. You should provide concise evidence within the narrative to tell us how you currently contribute to goal 2 and, if relevant, how you plan to achieve excellence in this goal during 2015–18. Tell us about:

- a) Reach – how you will work to ensure that more people who are currently least engaged in culture are experiencing your work/collections. Tell us what the current segmentation of your audience is, and what plans you have to develop your audience and how the audience profile will be larger and different as a result of this award. We are particularly interested in reaching more people beyond the ‘highly engaged’ segments as defined in the Arts Council’s recent research (*Arts audiences: insight*, 2011). You can find out more information about this on our website [here](#).
- b) Engagement – describe the museum’s (or consortium’s) commitment to the quality of the visitor experience; what the current satisfaction rate among visitors is and your plans for developing it; and how the museum (or consortium) will develop its work with communities and the public as active partners. How will you maximize opportunities to increase the depth and quality of experience among those accessing your work/collections? Reaching your audience can include both physical and digital engagement.

- c) Audiences – detail your approach to audience development for arts and culture as a whole and for developing shared approaches to the capture, sharing and reporting of audience data. An example of how to approach audience development planning can be found at audiencefinder.org.
- d) Distribution – describe your plans to widen engagement with your collections through loans, touring or digital platforms. How will you work to archive, catalogue, link and programme digital content and form partnerships that will help more people access your work/collections on digital platforms?
- e) Lifelong learning – describe the museum’s (or consortium’s) provision for adult learners and your plans for developing it, including through working with partners and the wider cultural environment.
- f) Diversity – describe how your audience profile reflects the demographic profile of the local population, the steps you take to ensure audiences are diverse, how your collections and their presentation and interpretation reflect the needs and interests of diverse communities, and how you actively recruit and develop a diverse pool of volunteers.
- g) International – how will you appeal to visitors from around the world, if applicable?
- h) Leadership – tell us if, and how, any of these criteria are reflected in your plans for leadership, either in your area or nationally.

5. How you will contribute towards goal 3

There is a limit of 2,000 words for this section. You should provide concise evidence within the narrative to tell us how you currently contribute to goal 3 and, if relevant, how you plan to achieve excellence in this goal during 2015–18. Tell us about:

- a) Innovation and adaptability – tell us how you plan to respond and change to meet future challenges in a strategic and thoughtful way, and how you help to support others do the same. Describe how you are able to demonstrate resilience and an ability to adapt to your external environment.
- b) Governance – describe your governance model and any plans for changing or strengthening it to better achieve your corporate aims or

attract new income streams. If you are applying as a consortium please describe how your governance structure will support a meaningful partnership between all of the members. How will you use self-evaluation to drive improvements in your performance and governance?

- c) Business models – tell us about your business model and plans to improve your future sustainability. Describe any intentions to use or share assets; this may include shared services, identifying economies of scale, or using assets (intellectual, human and physical) to diversify income streams. How will you apply an entrepreneurial approach to your planning? How will you work to increase the share of your income that comes from a wider range of contributed or earned income sources?
- d) Brand and marketing – please tell us how your brand, positioning and marketing will be affected by your plans.
- e) Sustainability – describe how your organisation embraces environmental sustainability and how you will work to reduce your carbon footprint and environmental impact.
- f) Partnerships – how will you work to forge new partnerships that advance your mission?
- g) Leadership – tell us if, and how, any of these areas are reflected in your plans for leadership, either in your area or nationally.

6. How you will contribute to goal 4

There is a limit of 2,000 words for this section. You should provide concise evidence within the narrative to tell us how you currently contribute to goal 4 and, if relevant, how you plan to achieve excellence in this goal during 2015–18. Tell us about:

- a) Leadership – describe the leadership that characterises the museum or consortium and the skills and experience of the individuals that support it; how will this envision and drive change to improve excellence across the museums sector? Tell us the number of museum mentors that would be made available from your staffing body, on either a geographic or speciality remit? (See [the museum mentor pages on the Arts Council's website](#) for further detail on what minimum expectations for museum mentors are).

- b) Partnerships – tell us about: your track record in forming effective partnerships locally, nationally and internationally with key contributors in tourism, the creative industries, the cultural heritage sector and the arts; your plans to develop these further to provide demonstrable added value to audiences; and how you will share expertise and develop networks to work with other contributors across the museum ecology, including the museum development network, national museums and galleries and subject specialist networks.
- c) Workforce development – tell us what your current range of workforce skills are, what assessment has been made of the workforce needs within the museum (or consortium) or your community, and what strategy exists to meet these needs. How will you contribute to the skills across the sector, ensuring these are right for the future? In what ways do you provide young people with high quality opportunities to gain employment and progress in the cultural and heritage sector, ensuring equality of access and appropriate remuneration?
- d) Diversity – describe how you will make progress towards ensuring that the leadership and workforce of your organisation reflect the diversity of your locality, and that entry and progression routes are fair? Tell us how you plan to promote and develop diversity and equality throughout the organisation and more widely in the museum community.

7. How you will contribute to goal 5

There is a limit of 2,000 words for this section. You should provide concise evidence within the narrative to tell us how you currently contribute to goal 5 and, if relevant, how you plan to achieve excellence in this goal during 2015–18. Tell us about:

- a) Quality – how will you demonstrate that your offer for children and young people is of high quality and develop models of best practice? Understanding and articulating the quality of the work that organisations deliver by, with and for children and young people is core to our remit. The ‘Inspiring learning for all’ framework provides a methodology to assess the quality of learning outcomes. And working with the sector we have developed seven principles for organisations to embed into their work (www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people/quality):
 - striving for excellence
 - being authentic
 - being exciting, inspiring and engaging
 - ensuring a positive, child-centered experience

- actively involving children and young people
 - providing a sense of personal progression
 - developing a sense of ownership and belonging
- b) Reach – how will you ensure that more children and young people have access to high quality cultural experiences in and out of school? Describe how you will develop a sustainable model for your offer for children and young people. Demonstrate credibility with a range of stakeholders to unlock resources and reach more children and young people. Tell us how you demonstrate flexibility – being responsive to local opportunities and the needs of children and young people. Tell us how you use or plan to use digital technology as a means of reaching children and young people.
- c) Diversity – tell us how you will ensure your programme is inclusive and accessible for all children and young people. What partnerships are in place to ensure a diverse range of children and young people are engaged?
- d) Partners – tell us how you work with partners and stakeholders, as well as linking to national initiatives, to improve the delivery of cultural opportunities for children and young people. Tell us, for example, how you will link to Bridge organisations and national initiatives such as Kids in Museums. How will you support young people’s achievement of Arts Award? How will you support schools’ achievement of Artsmark?
- e) Leadership – tell us if, and how, this goal is reflected in your plans for leadership, either in your area or nationally.

Organisational profile

In the organisational profile section of the application form we will look for evidence of your capacity for resilience. For a definition of resilience please see section two, [Organisational resilience](#). There is a limit of 1,000 words for this section.

1. How will you effectively lead and manage the programme of work that you propose? You should demonstrate:

- a) Clear awareness of risks to the successful delivery of your programme and evidence of appropriate means to mitigate.
- b) Suitability of management structure/governance arrangements and reporting.
- c) Likely effectiveness of decision-making processes.
- d) Likely effectiveness of the role of internal evaluation will play.

- e) The appropriateness and likely effectiveness of partnerships within your proposal.
- f) Clear plans to develop organisational sustainability/resilience.
- g) How the board is structured/constituted.
- h) Appropriateness of the skillset of the board.

In addition, applications from consortia should demonstrate:

- a) Likely effectiveness of the consortium's structure.
- b) Clarity of the role of the lead organisation.
- c) Effective collective decision-making and communication processes.
- d) Protocol for resolving disputes between partners.
- e) Appropriate levels of shared responsibility.
- f) Clear responsibility for the consolidation of reporting information and reporting arrangements.
- g) A history of consortia, including how long the consortium has worked together, and its likely ability to produce successful outcomes.

2. How you will ensure financial viability?

There is a limit of 1,000 words for this section. You should demonstrate:

- a) A clear and credible plan to build upon existing earned/contributed income or diversify into new income streams. We will be looking for an appropriate level of partnership funding.
- b) Justification for the level of funding requested. Current Major partner museums that are requesting more funding than the 2014/15 level, taking into account any reduction subsequent to the Chancellor's autumn budget statement of 2013, must use this section to explain why.
- c) How you would manage the risk that your applications for other funding programmes are unsuccessful. Tell us how you would adapt your activity in the event that any major pending funding decisions are unsuccessful, for example large scale capital.
- d) Convincing plans for how you intend to develop your resilience over the duration of the next funding agreement.
- e) Analysis of costs and efficiencies.
- f) Quality of financial controls, monitoring and reporting.
- g) An effective approach to maintaining and/or building reserves.
- h) Previous experience of managing large-scale grants (if not currently a Major partner museum).

In addition applications from **consortia** should demonstrate:

- a) A clear and transparent financial relationship between consortium members.

Attachments

Applicants **applying as an individual organisation** must attach with their application:

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 2014/15.
4. Your outline organisational budget for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Applicants **applying as a consortium** must attach with their application:

1. The lead applicant's financial statements for your previous financial year, prepared to the relevant legal standard for an organisation of your size and status.
2. The lead applicant's most recent management accounts.
3. The lead applicant's planned budget for 2014/15.
4. An outlined project budget for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 that consolidates the joint activity proposed in this application and shows clearly how much Major partner museum funding is apportioned to each organisation.
5. **Each consortium member** must attach documents 1–4 (with outline operational budgets provided for each consortium member for attachment 4) in the 'additional attachments' section of the form.
6. **Each consortium member** must provide their individual organisation's mission or purpose as an attachment in the 'additional attachments' section of the form.

Please note that the total combined size of your documents must not exceed 10 MB within the additional attachment section of the form.

Budgets

Your budgets should appear comprehensive, appropriate and suitable for the scale and type of programme. They should take into account inflationary aspects and the need to insure, repair or replace key assets. Value for money will be an important consideration. We expect organisations to generate income from other sources and your budgets should clearly illustrate projected income levels. We will also consider how you have planned your income and expenditure for this funding period alongside your management accounts for this current year.

Budget modelling

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

If you are a current Major partner museum and intend to apply for more than your 2014/15 grant level, taking into account any reduction subsequent to the Chancellor's autumn statement of 2013, you should provide **two budget models** for 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018 – one at the higher level and one at the 2014/15 grant level. Your budget should include notes explaining the impact of working with the lower budget, for example activities that would be cut and how this would have an impact on your service. You can also use the 'Financial viability' section of the application form to expand on your explanation. This will enable us to see what the impact of different levels of funding will be. Your outline budget models for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 should be incorporated into **one single document**. You can see an example of a scalable budget here: www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/information-funded-organisations/tools-templates.

Please note, if you are applying for more than you received in 2014/15 you should input the highest amount requested when you fill in the 'How much are you applying for' section of the application form. You should also base your narrative within the 'How you plan to use our funding to contribute to our goals' section on the higher level of funding requested.

Remember that we will consider uplifts to funding only in exceptional circumstances, where the scale of ambition increases proportionately and where there is evidence that our additional investment will lever additional match funding.

Please do not send unsolicited additional types of information, as this will not be considered within the assessment.

We reserve the right to ask any applicant to provide additional information over and above what you submit to us in your application.

SECTION FIVE: OUR ASSESSMENT PROMPTS

Our assessors will use 'prompts', that is, questions we ask about the application to help identify key issues. It is important to note that not all the prompts are relevant to all applications, and they should not be read as a checklist for applicants.

Prompts: Contributing to goal 1

- a) Does the applicant have a Designated collection?
- b) Are the museum or consortium's other collections of significant regional, national or international importance (demonstrated for example through loan requests)?
- c) Does the applicant demonstrate how they will develop the collection?
- d) Do the programmes create cultural experiences that demonstrate genuine ambition and skill?
- e) Has the applicant shown that they will use the collection in an imaginative or innovative way to attract and inspire visitors, or reach visitors beyond the museum? Is the programme likely to engage and inspire visitors and users, expanding their horizons and exploring new ideas?
- f) Is there evidence of a strong research and scholarship programme and how will this develop in the future? (This could be evidenced through publishing, peer review, academic papers, participation at conferences, formal links and partnerships with academic institutions, and employment of specialist curators. Where appropriate, we would expect organisations to actively participate in Subject Specialist Networks).
- g) Has the applicant shown a sophisticated understanding and approach to collections management?
- h) How will international exchange add value to programmes and audience experience?
- i) Has the applicant described clear and tangible plans for area or national leadership relating to this goal?

Prompts: Contributing to goal 2

- a) How does the applicant demonstrate a sound understanding of current audiences and compelling plans for developing them or addressing inequalities in audience reach?
- b) What evidence is there of commitment to a quality experience for visitors (quality of public spaces, customer service and visitor amenities), for example visitor attractions, Quality Assurance Award, Welcome Host etc?
- c) How does the applicant demonstrate a sound understanding of visitor satisfaction currently and provide compelling plans for developing it?
- d) What evidence is there of ambition and innovation in engaging communities, including evidence of responsiveness to audiences and communities?
- e) How does the applicant demonstrate plans to widen engagement, for example through community-based or co-created exhibitions, exhibition touring or the use of digital technologies? Are these plans realistic and achievable?
- f) How does the applicant provide inspiring, high quality learning environments, products and programmes for adults, as well as ambition in developing them?
- g) Are these plans supported by partnerships, for example with schools, colleges and universities?
- h) How will digital content and partnerships help more people access the organisation's work/collections on digital platforms?
- i) How successfully will the programme engage users/visitors from around the world?
- j) What evidence is there of a commitment to diversity and inclusion? How successful is the approach likely to be in reaching diverse audiences? How do collections and their presentation and interpretation reflect the needs and interests of diverse communities? How is the diversity of volunteers ensured?
- k) Is there evidence that the organisation is committed to developing audiences for culture as a whole and for developing shared approaches to the capture, sharing and reporting of audience data?
- l) Has the applicant described clear and tangible plans for area or national leadership relating to this goal?

Prompts: Contributing to goal 3

- a) Does the applicant provide identifiable examples of an informed approach to risk taking that welcomes creative risk but avoids financial or governance risks that could endanger the future of the collection or institution?
- b) Does the applicant mentor other organisations, for example by providing museum mentors to support and develop smaller independent museums?
- c) How does the applicant demonstrate ambition to work collaboratively to improve the resilience of the service/cluster/sector?
- d) In what way does the applicant demonstrate the ability to position itself responsively to meet the different priorities of a wide range of stakeholders?
- e) How well does the organisation demonstrate resilience and an ability to adapt to the external environment?
- f) To what degree does the organisation embrace environmental sustainability?
- g) Has the applicant described clear and tangible plans for area or national leadership relating to this goal?

Prompts: Contributing to goal 4

- a) What evidence has the applicant provided about leadership capacity in the future? Is this clearly linked to an ambition to play a wider leadership role across the sector? Is there a clear and tangible plan for this leadership role? Is there evidence that the leadership will be welcomed in the wider sector? Is this leadership distinct from and additional to any role as a provider of museum development?
- b) What evidence has the applicant provided of a track record in forming effective partnerships, such as the centrality of the museum in the partnership, effectiveness of partnerships in achieving its aims, the calibre of partners and benefits of the partnership to the museum, local community, region, etc?
- c) What evidence has the applicant given of a convincing strategy that embraces the entire museum ecology? This could, for example, include how they use museum mentors to support smaller museums.

- d) In what way does the applicant demonstrate an awareness of the development needs of its workforce or within the wider museum community and a commitment to addressing these? Is there a plan in place to do so?
- e) What evidence is there that the programme is inclusive and accessible? Is there evidence of a commitment to promoting and developing diversity and equality?
- f) Does the applicant provide young people with high quality opportunities to gain employment and progress in the cultural and heritage sector?
- g) What progress does the applicant demonstrate in ensuring that the leadership and workforce of the organisation reflect the diversity of the country, and that entry and progression routes are fair?

Prompts: Contributing to goal 5

- a) How successfully does the application promote and deliver heritage and culture for, by and with children and young people?
- b) How does the applicant demonstrate evidence of providing high quality learning experiences for children and young people (assessed within the 'Inspiring learning for all' framework for example) and an ambition to improve these?
- c) Does the applicant provide evidence of a strong partnership approach in the delivery of learning experiences for children and young people (relationships with schools, etc)? Do they have credibility with a range of partners and stakeholders in order to unlock resources and reach more children and young people?
- d) What ambition is there to develop their partnership approach (for example by forming relationships with Bridge organisations, linking to Arts Award or national initiatives such as Kids in Museums)? Have they considered the full range of potential partners and stakeholders?
- e) Does the applicant demonstrate a capacity for flexibility and responsiveness to local opportunities and the needs of children and young people?
- f) Is the programme inclusive and accessible for all children and young people? What partnerships are in place to ensure diverse children and young people are engaged?

- g) Is there evidence of engagement with digital technology as a means of reaching children and young people?
- h) Is there evidence of practical support for Arts Award and Artsmark?
- i) Does the application demonstrate that the offer for children and young people is sustainable?
- j) Has the applicant described clear and tangible plans for area or national leadership relating to this goal?

Prompts: How will you effectively lead and manage the programme of work that you propose?

- a) Is there strong awareness of risks to programme delivery and evidence of appropriate means to mitigate?
- b) Are the management structure/governance arrangements and reporting likely to be effective?
- c) How effective are the decision making processes likely to be?
- d) How effective is the role of evaluation likely to be?
- e) Are the proposed partnerships likely to be effective?
- f) Are the plans to strengthen organisational sustainability/resilience likely to be successful?
- g) Is the skillset of the board appropriate?
- h) Is the board structure/constitution appropriate?

In addition, for applications from **consortia**:

- a) What is the likely effectiveness of the consortium's structure and partnership working arrangements?
- b) Is the role of the lead organisation clear?
- c) Is there clear responsibility for the consolidation of reporting information and reporting arrangements?

- d) Is there an appropriate protocol for resolving disputes between consortium members?
- e) Is there a track record of the consortium working successfully together?

Prompts: How will you ensure financial viability?

- a) Is the overall budget comprehensive, appropriate and suitable for the scale and type of programme? Do operational costs appear appropriate?
- b) To what extent does the financial sustainability of the organisation present risks to its ability to contribute to our goals? To what extent has the organisation identified those risks and effectively identified steps to manage them?
- c) Is there an appropriate level of partnership funding, and is expected funding likely to be secured?
- d) Does the organisation have a clear and credible plan to build existing earned/contributed income or diversify into new income streams?
- e) Does the organisation have in place convincing plans of how it intends to strengthen its resilience over the duration of the next funding agreement?
- f) What evidence has the organisation shown of analysis of costs and efficiencies and are the ideas and plans for reduction likely to be effective?
- g) Are financial controls and monitoring and reporting processes robust?
- h) Does the organisation have any reserves, and does it adopt an appropriate approach to them?
- i) Does the organisation file its financial statements at Companies House and the Charities Commission on time?
- j) Does the organisation provide for insurance, replacement and repair of its key assets? (Assets might include a venue or a building, but also vehicles, computers and furnishings).
- k) Does the organisation have previous experience of managing large scale grants (if not currently a Major partner museum)?

In addition, for applications from **consortia**:

- a) Is the financial relationship between consortium members clear and transparent?

SECTION SIX: BALANCING THE PORTFOLIO

In the second stage of our decision making process we will have to decide how well the museum or consortium would fit into a balanced Major partner museum portfolio and meet the priorities of the programme. In doing this, we have to look at several areas and consider if we are achieving the right spread of investment across the arts and wider cultural ecology.

1. **Leadership:** to maximise the cultural, social and economic impact of regional museums there must be a strong and diverse leadership within the sector. We expect Major partner museums to show leadership beyond the individual museum. We will prioritise applications that show clear plans for wide reaching, empowering and inclusive leadership.
2. **Resilience:** for a definition of resilience see section two, [Organisational resilience](#). We will give added consideration to applications that show an imaginative, innovative and adaptable organisation – particularly where there is evidence of the potential for a step change in this area.
3. **Geographical spread:** we will take into account the need to support work by a national portfolio of funded organisations across the whole of England. However, we will consider how some organisations work intensively within their home region and some have a reach and impact far beyond their home region. Some will tour widely. We will take into account the potential reach of the portfolio as a whole and we are particularly interested in how organisations plan to reach places of current low arts engagement.
4. **Risk:** we will take into account the level of financial risk to our investment across the portfolio of museums.

These balancing criteria provide a framework against which we will make an informed but discretionary judgment about how each organisation might contribute to the overall programme. There may be applications that are strong in the first stage of assessment but are not funded because we do not think that they fit into this overall national picture.

SECTION SEVEN: FINALISING THE FUNDING OFFER

Any decision to offer funding will be conditional and subject to:

1. The delivery of a satisfactory business plan that covers the 2015–18 funding period. We ask for a copy of the business plan to accompany every funding agreement so that we can understand and monitor how the programme will be delivered and see how effectively the organisation is managing its affairs. We will also work closely with organisations, when their management and financial resilience capacity is given a high risk rating in the appraisal of their application, to strengthen strategies and approaches. This list is indicative of the kinds of expectations we will have for business plans:
 - articulate smart targets to reach more and/or a wider range of people, including people and places with the least engagement, and/or improve depth and quality of experience
 - integrate your plans for audience access with your plans for income generation
 - optimise the use of digital media and new technologies
 - show genuine commitment to diversity and the expectations of the Equalities Act 2010
 - include sustainability plans, a three-year equality plan and an equal opportunities policy that have been approved by your board and Arts Council England
2. Discussing and finalising a detailed funding agreement that may include specific conditions. We will also make use of funding agreements to define measures of success and agree expectations.
3. For consortia, a signed partnership agreement. It is one of our standard terms and conditions of grants that the organisation we enter into a grant agreement with cannot subcontract any of the project to other organisations without our prior agreement in writing. If we award a grant to a lead organisation wishing to work with partner organisations, we must approve a partnership agreement between the lead organisation and the other partners involved in the project. We will provide broad guidance on what your partnership agreement should include, but we recommend that partnerships seek their own legal advice, if necessary.

The timeline for finalising both the funding agreement and business plans for successful applicants is July 2014 to February 2015.

The negotiation of the funding agreement and finalisation of the business plan could result in agreed changes to your planned activities and budgets and consequently to your level of funding. Our offer remains an offer in principle until we have finalised the funding agreement and you have signed it. In some cases we may withdraw our offer or it may lapse.

SECTION EIGHT: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If you are not happy with the way we dealt with your application, please contact us and we will discuss this with you. If you are still unhappy, you can ask us for a copy of our complaints procedure which is also on our website, www.artscouncil.org.uk. This is a unique complaints procedure specific to this funding programme. Our standard complaints procedure does not apply to this programme.

Please note that you can only complain if you believe we have not followed our published procedures when dealing with your application. You cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against the decision.

SECTION NINE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

The Arts Council is committed to being as open as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our funding decisions.

We are also listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. **By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks to see these under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.**

We may not release those parts of the documents that are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Please see the Freedom of Information website at www.foi.gov.uk for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions.

We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with the decision-making process.