

2023-26 Investment Programme

Guidance for Applicants

For organisations applying to deliver our Outcomes

Published: January 2022



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THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®

Access support

We are committed to being open and accessible to everyone. We realise some people may find that there are barriers to applying for a grant or accessing our services. **Our Access Support information** sheet explains the ways we can help.

- **Our Access Support information:**

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>

Do you need this information in another format?

You can also find the following versions of this guidance on our **website**:

- audio
- British Sign Language (BSL)
- Easy Read
- large print

- **Website:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/get-funding/national-portfolio-2023-onwards>

If you experience or expect any barrier with making your application and would like more information, please contact us.

Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

Web: [artscouncil.org.uk](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

Post: Arts Council England – NPO

The Hive, 49 Lever Street

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You can also **Livechat** with us by visiting our website:
artscouncil.org.uk

We will be as flexible as possible and consider and respond to requests on an individual basis.

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Please note that this guidance is not yet complete. We expect to issue an addendum to this guidance by early February 2022. This addendum will set out in detail how we will expect new National Portfolio Organisations to contribute to the Government's 'levelling up' policy. You are advised not to complete and submit your application until you have read this addendum.

Welcome to the National Portfolio Organisation programme

Thank you for considering applying to become a National Portfolio Organisation for the period 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2026. We welcome applications from organisations that are not currently in receipt of National Portfolio investment, as well as from current National Portfolio Organisations who believe they can deliver strongly against our strategy, **Let's Create**.

- **Let's Create:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate>

Before you begin your application, you should read this guidance as well as Let's Create. You should also read our **Delivery Plan for 2021-24**.

- **Delivery Plan for 2021-24:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/delivery-plan-2021-2024>

This guidance is for those organisations who are considering applying to be a National Portfolio Organisation. Being a National Portfolio Organisation will provide opportunities for creative and cultural organisations to plan and deliver over the long term. Investment will also provide organisations with three-year support as they recover from the pandemic.

For our new National Portfolio Organisation programme, we are looking to bring together a new cohort of brilliant creative and cultural organisations from across the country. These organisations will put the public at the heart of their work and be committed to working collaboratively with each other and with other individuals and organisations within all our communities.

We expect to invest a significant proportion of our income in the National Portfolio Organisation programme over the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2026. All National Portfolio Organisations will play a central role in helping us deliver Let's Create. They will be expected to work together to achieve our three Outcomes and their Elements, demonstrate best practice in relation to our Investment Principles and take the lead in realising the vision which Let's Create sets out:

‘By 2030, England will be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.’

In order to realise this vision, we are committed to investing in a wide range of creative and cultural organisations as National Portfolio Organisations. It will be more representative of this country in terms of geographical location, the audiences it serves and the profile of its governance, leadership and workforce (in terms of both protected characteristics and socio-economic status).

If your organisation is excited by and committed to delivering Let's Create, please read this guidance to understand how to apply to the National Portfolio Organisation programme. In the next section we will tell you about the important steps you will need to complete before you start your application.

Decide what type of application you want to make

We are currently running an application process for two different programmes which will invest in organisations from 2023/4 to 2025/6: **National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) and Investment Principles Support Organisations (IPSOs).**

Please note that you cannot apply to be both. You should make your decision based on reading **Let's Create** and the **Delivery Plan for 2021-24** and then thinking about which of the two options (below) offers the best opportunity for your organisation:

- **Let's Create:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030>
- **Delivery Plan for 2021-24:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/delivery-plan-2021-2024>

You will need to decide whether you are seeking to deliver our Outcomes and their Elements (NPOs)

In your application, you will need to clearly tell us:

- how you will help us achieve at least one of the Outcomes, and one or more of their Elements
- what plans you have, or are making, to embed and progress each of the four Investment Principles in your own organisation, and how you will work on improving your performance against them

Or

support others to embed our Investment Principles (IPSOs)

In your application you will need to clearly tell us:

- how you will help other cultural organisations and/or individuals embed and progress at least one of the four Investment Principles
- what plans you have, or are making, to embed and progress each of the four Investment Principles in your own organisation, and how you will work on improving your performance against them

Please note, this guidance document is for applicants seeking three-year investment to deliver our Outcomes and their Elements (NPOs).

If you wish to apply for three-year investment to support others to embed the Investment Principles (IPSOs), please find the relevant **Guidance** for Applicants on our website.

- **Guidance:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-2>

Timeline for the application process

The below sets out the timeline for the National Portfolio Organisation application process.

- **20 January 2022:**
Publish applicant guidance
Deadline for booking an introductory conversation
- **By early February 2022:**
Communicate planning figures to current National Portfolio Organisations
Publish guidance addendum and the Relationship Framework
- **14 February 2022 (12pm midday):**
Programme opens for applications
- **8 April 2022 (4pm):**
Deadline for booking an introductory conversation
- **22 April 2022 (4pm):**
Final date/time for introductory conversations for new applicants
Deadline for creating an applicant profile on our online application system, Grantium

- **18 May 2022 (12pm midday):**
Deadline for submitting applications
- **27 April – 14 October:**
Eligibility checking, assessment and decision making
- **By 14 October 2022:**
We will tell you our decision
- **Mid-October 2022 – End of January 2023:**
Funding agreement negotiation for organisations we have made conditional offers to
- **1 April 2023:**
Start of 2023/24 – 2025/26 investment period

On behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Arts Council is investing government funding and National Lottery funding into the National Portfolio in order that people and communities across the country can benefit from access to creativity and culture. Organisations that receive government funding when they join the National Portfolio will be required to acknowledge the funding they have received as government funding. Alternatively, if they receive National Lottery funding when they join the National Portfolio, they will be required to acknowledge the funding as National Lottery funding.

Before you start your application

This section will help you decide if you want to make an application to be a National Portfolio Organisation.

Check if you are eligible to apply

Who can apply?

Before beginning your application, check if you are eligible to apply. You must meet the following criteria:

- Organisations must be able to clearly demonstrate that their primary aims within the context of their application are around creativity and culture and that the activities they are applying for fall within the **remit of Arts Council England**.
 - We will use the **definitions of ‘creativity’ and ‘culture’ in Let’s Create** to help establish eligibility
- The programme of work that our investment would support must mainly benefit artists, practitioners, participants or audiences in England
- Organisations must have a registered address within the United Kingdom
- The lead organisation (the organisation submitting the application) should be properly constituted as an organisation as one of the following:
 - limited companies registered at Companies House
 - community interest companies (CICs) registered with the CIC regulator
 - charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs) registered with the Charity Commission
 - charitable companies or charitable trusts registered with the Charity Commission
 - limited liability partnerships registered at Companies House

- partnerships established under a partnership deed governed by the Partnership Act 1890 or the Limited Partnerships Act 1907, where a signed partnership agreement in writing is in place
- community benefit and co-operative societies regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)
- Royal Charter bodies
- statutory bodies and other public bodies including universities and local authorities who run or maintain cultural services
- Museums applying to this programme must be **Accredited (or working towards Accreditation)** and must be based in England
- Public libraries operating as part of the statutory service as defined in the Public Libraries and Museums Act of 1964 are eligible to apply for this programme where the primary aims of the application are creative and cultural activity
- Applicants that have not been a National Portfolio Organisation in the 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023 period must have an introductory conversation with an Arts Council England member of staff. This includes organisations that have been a consortium partner in the 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023 period (that is, they have not been the lead organisation)

- **Remit of Arts Council England:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries>
- **Definitions of ‘creativity’ and ‘culture’ in Let’s Create:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/strategy-2020-2030/our-vision>
- **Accredited (or working towards Accreditation):** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/uk-museum-accreditation-scheme>

Please note that the properly constituted organisation meeting the eligibility criteria above will be the one we will enter into the funding agreement with. They will be wholly accountable for the grant.

Consortiums

We welcome applications from consortiums. By ‘consortium’ we mean a group of separate organisations joining together in a contractual arrangement and co-operating to deliver a programme of activity for the whole of the 2022/23–2025/26 investment period. We will not invest in consortium applications for specific projects.

One organisation must act as the lead organisation and submit the application. Your application must show the benefits of, and reasons for, working as a consortium and all partners must be firmly committed to working together. The lead organisation will be solely accountable for managing the application and any grant that we award and will be the only consortium partner classed as a National Portfolio Organisation.

When making a decision on your application, we will take into account how the lead organisation and partner organisations are governed and managed (including their financial management). If you are successful, we will need to approve your written agreement with your partners before it is signed.

Read our guidance for partnership agreements.

- **Read our guidance for partnership agreements:**
https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE_Partnership_Agreements_Guidance_August_2014.pdf

Organisations cannot be part of a consortium application and apply as an organisation in their own right. Organisations cannot be part of more than one consortium application.

Who cannot apply?

Through the National Portfolio Organisation programme, we cannot accept applications from:

- **Individuals**

We cannot accept applications from individuals, unless you are applying as a director of your own company.

We will not accept applications from people applying in a purely personal capacity.

- **Arm's Length Bodies**

We cannot accept applications by and on behalf of Arm's Length Bodies. This includes as part of a consortium application.

- By Arm's Length Bodies, we mean organisations that are directly accountable to, and in receipt of Grant in Aid from, central Government or from UK devolved Governments.

- **Any organisations that don't meet the criteria set out in the 'Who can apply' section**

If you are not eligible for this programme, you may still be eligible for one of our other funding programmes such as **Developing your Creative Practice** or **National Lottery Project Grants**. Visit our website for more information on **our available funds**.

- **Developing your Creative Practice:**

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/DYCP>

- **National Lottery Project Grants:**

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/ProjectGrants>

- **Our available funds:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding>

We cannot support applications for activity that is:

- already funded by Arts Council England through another programme, for example National Lottery Project Grants
- aimed at making a profit to be distributed to members or shareholders
 - Where we fund an organisation that can distribute funds to shareholders, we would restrict use of our investment to not-for-profit activities

Attend a digital briefing

If you are thinking of applying, we strongly recommend that you attend one of our digital briefing sessions before you begin your application. These sessions will be held in February and March. The digital briefings will cover the information in this guidance about how to make an application.

Book onto a session on our website

All sessions will be recorded, so if you're unable to attend you will still be able to access this information later. You can also read our **Frequently Asked Questions**, which includes responses to questions asked at each of the sessions.

- **Frequently Asked Questions:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/frequently-asked-questions-national-portfolio-organisations-2023#section-1>

Have an introductory conversation

Organisations not currently a National Portfolio Organisation

All applicants that are not currently a National Portfolio Organisation must have an 'introductory conversation' with a member of our staff in good time before making an application. This includes organisations that have been consortium partners in the 2018-23 investment period that are now submitting their own application.

An introductory conversation is a scheduled, structured one-to-one conversation of up to an hour with one of our members of staff. It will likely take place by phone or virtual meeting. At this session, we can help explain application criteria, discuss your plans (including how much you are considering applying for if you are not currently a National Portfolio Organisation) and give you information on our full range of investment programmes.

As a general guide, in this conversation we would aim to cover the following points:

- Should we be aware of any access support needs?
- Why are you applying for National Portfolio Organisation investment?
- Which Outcomes and Elements are you hoping to deliver against?
- Have you considered the level of monitoring and governance oversight that will be required if you are offered funding? What is the current structure?
- What might be an appropriate level of funding to request, given the type and scale of your organisation?
- Have you got any questions about the guidance?

We will not be able to read or provide written comments on draft applications during introductory conversations or at any other time.

To book an introductory conversation, you should contact our Customer Services team. You can contact our Customer Services team by phone on 0161 934 4317 or by email on **enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk**. You can also **Livechat** with us by visiting **our website**. Our Customer Services team can also advise on any access support needs.

• **Our website:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>

The deadline for booking an introductory conversation is **4pm on Friday 8 April 2022**.

The latest date for having an introductory conversation is **4pm on Friday 22 April 2022**.

Please note that if you have not had an introductory conversation by this date, your application will be ineligible.

Organisations that are currently a National Portfolio Organisation

Applicants that currently receive National Portfolio Organisation investment can also have an 'introductory conversation'. This will be limited to one conversation of up to an hour with your Relationship Manager following the same format as for those organisations that are not currently part of the portfolio. Current National Portfolio Organisations can arrange their conversations directly with their Relationship Manager.

Decide if National Portfolio Organisation investment is right for you

We will invest a significant proportion of our income in our National Portfolio Organisations from 2023/24 – 2025/26. National Portfolio Organisations will be expected to play a key role in helping us achieve the aims set out in our Strategy for 2020-2030, **Let's Create**.

- **Let's Create:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate>

To help you decide if you should apply to join as a new National Portfolio Organisation, we strongly advise that you read the whole of this guidance as well as the following information:

- **Let's Create**, our Strategy for 2020-2030
Let's Create was published in 2020 and sets out the Arts Council's 10-year strategy for creativity and culture.
- **Our Delivery Plan for 2021-24**
- The Delivery Plan for 2021-24 sets out the actions we will take to make progress towards realising the vision and Outcomes in Let's Create, including our investment in our next national portfolio.
- **Our Relationship Framework** – available on our website in February 2022
This sets out how we will work with National Portfolio Organisations during the lifetime of the funding agreement.

- **Let's Create:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030>
- **Our Delivery Plan for 2021-24:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/delivery-plan-2021-2024>
- **Our Relationship Framework:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-5>

The advice to read the information listed on the previous page applies both to current National Portfolio Organisations as well as organisations considering applying to join for the first time.

What we expect from National Portfolio Organisations

If you are successful with your application to join as a National Portfolio Organisation, we will have a number of important expectations of your organisation.

Delivering against Let's Create

Arts Council England's Strategy for 2020-2030, Let's Create, is built around three **Outcomes**:

- Creative People
- Cultural Communities
- A Creative and Cultural Country

We have listed a number of Elements for each Outcome which we think are important to ensure progress towards achieving the Outcomes. You can read about the **Elements for each outcome**.

- **Elements for each outcome:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/delivery-plan-2021-2024/introduction>

Let's Create also has four **Investment Principles**:

- Inclusivity and Relevance
- Environmental Responsibility
- Dynamism
- Ambition and Quality

Each Investment Principle has three ‘core features’, which you can **read on our website**.

- **Read on our website:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/explore-investment-principles>

National Portfolio Organisations will be expected to focus on delivering against at least one of our Outcomes and one or more of its supporting Elements. We are keen to see quality and depth of delivery. In general, rather than trying to deliver all our Outcomes and all their Elements, we would recommend organisations focus on one or two Outcomes and deliver against a limited number of Elements in detail. However, we do expect organisations applying for a higher level of investment to address more of our Outcomes and more of our Elements in this detailed way. In practice, this means that organisations applying for more than £1 million of investment per year are unlikely to be successful unless they show how they will support all three of our Outcomes.

As part of our 2023-26 Investment Programme, we will also invest in some organisations that are focused on supporting other organisations and/or individuals in the cultural sector to embed one or more of our Investment Principles in their work. Applications focused on this type of work are not required to demonstrate direct delivery of our Outcomes.

The Guidance for Applicants to become an Investment Principles Support Organisations can be found on **our website**.

- **Our website:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-2>

All organisations applying as National Portfolio Organisations or to become an Investment Principles Support Organisation will need to demonstrate how they are planning to adopt the four Investment Principles within their own organisation.

Governance

For this investment process, we will pay increased attention to the governance arrangements that organisations have in place to oversee their funding agreements with us. You can **read more about that in our Importance of Good Governance information sheet**.

- **Read more about that in our Importance of Good Governance information sheet:**

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>

We expect to see boards and oversight groups taking an active role in helping to embed the **Investment Principles** in their organisations and you can read more about that on our website.

- **Investment Principles:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/governance-working-investment-principles>

Relationship Framework

As well as strongly delivering against Let's Create, we will expect you to work within our Relationship Framework (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-5>). This is a document that sets out how we will work with National Portfolio Organisations during the lifetime of the funding agreement. The Relationship Framework for the 2023/24 – 2025/26 investment period will be available on our website in February and all applicants should read it before making an application.

Monitoring and reporting

National Portfolio Organisations will need to meet specific requirements on monitoring and on data reporting. This is so that we can track the progress of our investment programmes in delivering our strategy and provide important data, evidence and insight for the sector and our stakeholders.

We will consider where we can make reasonable adjustments to our monitoring and reporting arrangements for organisations with specific access needs.

If you are successful, your National Portfolio Organisation programme funding agreement will have agreed targets and success measures (based on your application to us) that we will expect you to achieve. Failure to achieve these is likely to involve the Arts Council intervening with a range of different measures. This includes the possibility of your funding being withheld, reduced or withdrawn during the investment period.

You should give serious consideration to whether becoming a National Portfolio Organisation is right for your organisation. If you decide not to apply this time, you may be eligible to apply for one of our other funding programmes, such as National Lottery Project Grants. You can find more details about National Lottery Project Grants and our other funding programmes on **our website**.

- **Our website:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding>

Equality, fair pay and support for freelancers

We are funded by the public, which means we are accountable to them. We have a duty to make sure that:

- our funds are invested wisely
- organisations are well-run
- the work we support keeps to legal standards on pay and equality
- we meet the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 and the protected characteristics as defined in the **Equality Act 2010**

- **Equality Act 2010:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

We are also committed to promoting equality of opportunity regardless of class or socio-economic background. We want all organisations to deliver their programme in a sustainable way – for their staff, for freelancers, and for the long-term health of the sector we're all part of.

Before you make your application, you should read our **Equality and Fair Pay information sheet**.

- **Equality and Fair Pay information sheet:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>

Our Delivery Plan for 2021-24 sets out **four equality objectives**, which explain how we will put our legal duty into action.

- **Four equality objectives:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-delivery-plan-2021-2024/equality-objectives>

Our Delivery Plan also sets out our commitment to investing in cultural organisations that provide improved access and opportunity, including offering more equitable and transparent support for creative and cultural practitioners and clearer progression routes into the industry.

You can read more about this in our **Supporting Practitioners information sheet**. This provides guidance, good practice and signposting to help organisations improve their support for creative and cultural practitioners.

- **Supporting Practitioners information sheet:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>

We will expect all National Portfolio Organisations to share and uphold our commitments. You should not consider making an application unless you can put them into practice when planning and delivering your activity over the 2023/24 – 2025/26 investment period.

Making your application

Before reading this section, please make sure you have completed the necessary steps in the '**Before you make your application**' section of this guidance.

How do I apply?

All applications to the National Portfolio Organisation programme are made through our online application portal, Grantium. You can find our guidance on how to use Grantium on **our website**.

- **Our website:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/get-funding/our-application-portal-grantium>

Create an/update your applicant profile

To apply online, you need to create an applicant profile on Grantium if you do not have one already. Your applicant profile then needs to be validated by a member of our team. Please be aware that it takes up to five working days from the date you submit your applicant profile for us to validate it. So please make sure you leave plenty of time.

The deadline for submitting your applicant profile is **4pm on Friday 22 April 2022**.

If you already have an applicant profile you **must review all information** to ensure it is up to date before you start an application. Please see the guidance, **How to set up and manage an applicant profile**.

- **How to set up and manage an applicant profile:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/grantium-support#section-2>

Complete the online application form

You must apply online through Grantium. We do not accept printed applications, but if you have difficulty applying online, please **contact our Customer Services team**. You can also refer to our **Access Support information sheet for more information**.

You can start your application on Grantium, save your work and come back at any time to complete it.

We have also published a **Word version of the application form** to help you prepare your application offline.

- **Contact our Customer Services team:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/contact-us>
- **Access Support information sheet for more information:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>
- **Word version of the application form:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-2>

Include the necessary attachments

You must provide the following attachments with your application form:

- your financial statements for your previous financial year, prepared to the relevant legal standard for an organisation of your size and legal status

- If your organisation has not been established long enough to have a set of financial statements, you should upload an explanatory statement
- If your organisation was previously trading in some other form (for example, as a service within a local authority or if two or more organisations have recently merged), you should also upload an explanatory statement and financial statements for the previous financial year where applicable
- the completed **Activity Plan for Outcomes** using this template
- the completed **Investment Principles Plan** using this template
- the completed **Financial information** using this template

- **Activity Plan for Outcomes template:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-3>
- **Investment Principles Plan template:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-3>
- **Financial information template:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-3>

If you have not attached the information in the correct format or using the templates we have provided, we will not be able to consider your application and it may be deemed ineligible.

Please only provide the information we have asked for. We will not consider:

- any additional information submitted (including any hyperlinks)
- any further information you send after you have submitted your application unless we have specifically asked you for it

When can I apply?

We will accept applications for the new National Portfolio Organisation programme from **12pm (midday), Monday 14 February 2022**. Applications must be submitted by **12pm (midday), Wednesday 18 May 2022**.

How much money can I apply for?

For applicants that are not currently National Portfolio Organisations:

The **minimum** annual award you can apply to us for is £50,000 per year (£150,000 over the three-year investment period). We will discuss an appropriate level of investment for your organisation with you in your introductory conversation.

Your application will be for three years' investment. The application form asks you to say how much you are requesting in each of the three financial years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26.

If we make a conditional offer of investment, we may make an offer at a lower level than the amount applied for, based on our assessment of your application.

For current National Portfolio Organisations:

Current National Portfolio Organisations will be given a 'planning figure' which will match or be less than the level of funding you were allocated for 2022/23. This will be sent by email by the beginning of February 2022. Please be aware that the allocation of a planning figure does not guarantee that we will make an offer to you.

We have raised the minimum level of funding to £50,000 per year. For organisations currently receiving between £40,000 and £49,999 per year, your planning figure will be increased to the minimum level of £50,000.

You **must** use the planning figure as the basis of the budget included in your application.

If you would like to request a higher level of investment, there is an opportunity within the form to specify the additional amount you want to request and to explain how you would use it. We want to create a National Portfolio that is more representative of this country in terms of geographical location and the profile of its governance, leadership and workforce (in terms of both protected characteristics and socio-economic status). It is likely that we will only provide additional investment to current National Portfolio Organisations that have demonstrated in their application credible plans to help us achieve this goal of a more representative portfolio.

If we make a conditional offer of investment, we may make an offer at a lower level than the planning figure provided.

For all applicants:

You cannot apply to us to replace local authority or other regular funding. For organisations that are current National Portfolio Organisations, we understand that if funding from other partners is reduced or withdrawn, this may result in a change of activity levels or programme.

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 must note the reasons why in your budget and finance section of the application form.

Completing your application

This section lists all the sections and questions in the application form and explains what we will think about when we read your answers. For each question, we have generally provided the following information:

- The information you need to provide in your response
- What we will consider when reviewing your response
- Additional tips to help you when preparing your response

Organisation and contact details

In this section of the application form, your organisation and contact details will automatically appear based on the information in your applicant profile. You should make sure this is up to date.

Your organisation

In this section of the application form, we ask some questions about your organisation, its track record and how you will lead and manage the programme of activity that you propose.

Describe your organisation or consortium, including your mission or purpose (up to 2,000 characters)

The information you need to provide in your response

Tell us what your organisation's overall mission or purpose is.

This may be drawn from your company's legal constitution or your current business plan. If you are applying on behalf of a consortium tell us who the other members are.

What we will consider when reviewing your response

- Is the organisation's main mission and purpose creative and cultural activity, or is this an application from an organisation outside the cultural sector that is applying to join the national portfolio to deliver creative and/or cultural activity?
- Is collaboration and partnership working core to the organisation's work?

Additional tips

If your organisation is based in one part of the country and delivers its activity elsewhere, remember to include that information.

Tell us about your organisation's track record in access and excellence in creativity and culture and how that makes you well-placed to make a strong contribution to Let's Create (up to 7,000 characters)

The information you need to provide in your response

Tell us about your work to date. You should focus on providing us with information about:

- why you think your work is high quality
- what steps you have taken to improve access to your organisation and your programme of activities
- in outline, the audiences that engage with your activities
- why you think you are a well-run organisation that merits public investment

By 'access' we mean ensuring that a wider range of people benefit from creativity and culture, particularly those who are currently under-represented in publicly funded culture. This relates to both:

- the public (for instance your organisation's audiences, visitors, participants etc); and
- the workforce, leadership and governance of your organisation

What we will consider when reviewing your response

- Does the applicant provide a convincing case that they have been successful in widening access and increasing opportunities for those who are currently underserved by publicly funded arts and culture?
- If they operate a public facing building, does the applicant tell us how accessible it is to people with access needs?
- Does the applicant demonstrate that they are representative of their community in terms of their programme?
 - For example, does the work that is programmed reflect the background and interests of the community they serve?
- Does the applicant demonstrate that they are representative of their community in terms of their audience and/or participants or visitors?

- Does the applicant demonstrate that they are representative of their community in terms of their governance, leadership and workforce?
- Does the applicant demonstrate that they are ambitious for their organisation and have been successful in improving the quality of their work?
- Does the applicant provide evidence of how their work is perceived by their audiences, community, peers and media (if relevant)?
- Does the applicant provide a convincing case that they are a well-managed organisation in terms of the partnerships they have developed within and beyond their community?

We will consider the information you give us about your organisation's past experience and programme, and we will provide a written assessment of how well-placed we believe you are to help deliver Let's Create during the 2023/24 – 2025/26 investment period.

Additional tips

This section asks you to look back at your recent (up to five years) track record and tell us how you assess the quality of your work and how you have improved access and opportunities for your community/communities. Try to build a story about the changes you have made in your organisation during this period to improve the performance of your organisation and increase access.

In a later section of the application form, we will ask you to tell us what changes you plan to make, if you receive funding from us, to improve your Inclusivity and Relevance and Ambition and Quality.

If there have been particular changes to your organisation as a result of the pandemic which will help you deliver Let's Create, you should highlight these too

Tell us about your governance arrangements and how you will effectively lead and manage the programme of activity that you propose (up to 7,000 characters)

The information you need to provide in your response

Tell us how your organisation is governed and led. You should include any relevant information from your constitution as well as information about any subcommittees and staff management or working groups. You should also tell us about any changes you plan to make in relation to your governance or oversight if you are successful with this application.

What we will consider when reviewing your response

- How relevant is the applicant's governance document?
 - your governance document will automatically appear in your application form based on the information in your applicant profile. You should make sure this is up to date
- How effective are the applicant's (current or planned) governance and oversight functions?
- Does the applicant have plans to refresh their board or oversight group and are they achievable?
- Has the applicant clearly set out how their board or oversight group will effectively monitor and report on their organisation's performance against any future funding agreements with Arts Council England?

- How well has the applicant explained how they might need to adapt and change their governance, oversight and management systems to embed the Investment Principles in their operation?
- How well does the applicant understand and manage conflicts of interest?
- If the applicant is a consortium, how robust and effective are the applicant's partnership arrangements?
 - the consortium's lead organisation will need to tell us about their partners and outline their shared objectives

When reviewing your response to this question and your governance document, we will carry out a risk assessment of your application to see if we believe there are any weaknesses and threats to your ability to lead and manage the activity you propose. This will help us decide whether to offer you funding and/or identify any steps that we would need you to take as part of the funding agreement negotiation. This will also help us identify any additional conditions that may need to be added to your funding agreement, should we decide to make you a conditional offer.

As part of our risk assessment, we will apply a rating:

- Minor
- Moderate
- Major

Additional tips

For this investment process, we will pay increased attention to the governance arrangements that organisations have in place. We will need to be confident that they are appropriate for overseeing a National Portfolio Organisation's funding agreement. You can **read more about that in our Importance of Good Governance information sheet**.

- **Read more about that in our Importance of Good Governance information sheet:**

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>

We also expect to see boards and oversight groups taking an active role in helping to embed the **Investment Principles** in their organisations and you can read more about that on our website. We strongly recommend that you read the material in both these links as you prepare your answer to this question.

- **Investment Principles:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/governance-working-investment-principles>

Does touring form a significant part of your activity?

You will select 'yes' or 'no' in response to this question. You will be able to provide more information about the location of your activity in the Activity plan template.

Amount requested

In this section of your application, we will ask you how much money you are applying for. The amounts for each investment year you have entered in the eligibility quiz will automatically appear in your application form. You will be able to edit the amounts.

For organisations that are current National Portfolio Organisations

If you are a current National Portfolio Organisation, the level of investment included in your budget must not exceed the planning figure you have been given.

Your responses to questions about how you will deliver against our Outcomes, embed the Investment Principles and how you will manage your programme of activity must be based on this budget.

If you would like to ask for an increased amount of investment, you can do this in a separate section of the application form (see below). Please be aware that we will still expect to see clear evidence of how you will deliver against the Let's Create Outcomes and embed the Investment Principles in your work within the main part of your application and your core budget.

For organisations who are not currently National Portfolio Organisations

Organisations not currently National Portfolio Organisations should think carefully about how much investment you will need to deliver the activity proposed in your application form. You should have discussed this with an Arts Council England member of staff during your introductory conversation [See our website].

Contributing to the Outcomes

In this section we will ask you how your proposed activity will contribute towards achieving the Outcomes set out in **Let's Create**.

- **Let's Create:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030>

You will be asked to tick which Outcomes your proposed activity will contribute to:

- Creative People
- Cultural Communities
- A Creative and Cultural Country

The information you need to provide in your response

Having read Let's Create and our Delivery Plan for 2021-24, please tell us which Outcomes the activity you are planning for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026 will help deliver.

You must tick at least one of these boxes. You can tick up to three.

Additional tips

We are looking for applications that propose high quality activity that delivers in depth against our Outcomes (and their Elements). Depending on the level of investment you are applying for, we would advise organisations to focus on one or two Outcomes in detail, rather than trying to deliver against them all. However, we do expect organisations applying for a higher level of investment to address more Outcomes and

Elements in this detailed way. In practice, this means that organisations applying for more than £1 million of investment per year are unlikely to be successful, unless they show how they will support all three of our Outcomes.

Please tell us what percentage of your planned programme of activity contributes to each Outcome you have selected

The information you need to provide in your response

Please provide an estimate of how the activity you are planning will contribute to each of the Outcomes you have applied against. For the purposes of the application, the sum of the activities you include in your template is 100 per cent. If you have only entered one activity, that activity equals 100 per cent.

What we will consider when reviewing your response

We will not use this information as part of the assessment of our application. However, we will use this information to try and build a group of National Portfolio Organisations that deliver across all three Outcomes.

Additional tips

We recognise that these percentages will be approximations. We do not expect you to spend long calculating these. The important thing is that your answer to this question does not conflict with the information provided in the previous question. For example: if you told us that you will only be delivering against Creative People, then your response here should be 100 per cent Creative People.

We also recognise that some activity you are planning may deliver against more than one Outcome. In this case consider which Outcome that activity is primarily supporting and apportion it against that Outcome.

If you are planning to deliver against more than one Outcome, then it may help to consider the amount of your resources (for example, staffing or budget) you are proposing to invest in each of your activities.

You may find it helpful to return to this question when you have completed the Activity plan.

Please provide an outline of your organisation's plans for the three-year investment period, which sets out an overview of your organisation's proposed contribution to Let's Create and its Outcomes (up to 10,000 characters)

The information you need to provide in your response

Please provide an overview of your plans for the period 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2026. Tell us how you think these plans will help deliver Let's Create and its Outcomes.

What we will consider when reviewing your response

We will assess your response to this question and your Activity Plan for Outcomes for 2023/24 – see below – together.

Additional tips

You should use this question to give us an overview of your plans for the full three years (the Activity Plan in the next section will provide an opportunity for you to provide detail on your plans for 2023/24). You should focus on that activity which you believe will help deliver Let's Create and its Outcomes.

Where possible focus on the difference you're aiming to make over the three-year investment period and what success will look like for you.

Don't use this answer to talk about your work in embedding the four Investment Principles. You will have an opportunity to provide detailed information about your planned work around the Investment Principles in a different part of the application.

Activity Plan for Outcomes for 2023/24

The **Activity Plan for Outcomes for 2023/24** is a separate template you will need to attach to your application form. You can **download it here**. The Activity plan is for you to provide more detail about how you will contribute to the Outcomes in 2023/24.

- **Download it here:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-3>

The information you need to provide in your response

At the top of the Activity Plan, you are asked to tell us:

- the name of your organisation
 - this should be the same name as for the main application

- Project Unique Reference Number
 - you will get this when you start your application on Grantium

In the Activity Plan, you will need to provide information about up to 10 activities you will be delivering (across up to three Outcomes). Please note that you don't need to include that many if that's not appropriate for your organisation. Where activities belong together – and deliver against the same Outcome – then you could choose to express that group of activities as a single activity.

You will need to complete the following columns for each activity:

Primary Outcome (Column C): For each of your activities, please use the drop-down menu to select the main Outcome the activity will be delivering against. You can only choose one Outcome per activity.

Elements (Column D): For each activity, tick the box(es) to show which of the Elements are relevant for that activity. You can select as many Elements as you think are relevant for the Outcome you have selected in column C. A full list of the Elements is included in the form.

Activity (Column E): Give a brief outline description of the activity including who the activity will benefit (in no more than 250 characters).

For example: co-creating a new piece of community work, targeted at audiences who haven't previously attended our work

We want to ensure that a wider range of people benefit from our investment, so do please tell us where an activity is targeted at people who are currently under-represented in terms of

engagement in publicly funded culture, for example those from a lower socio-economic background.

Outputs (Column G): Tell us what the outputs are for the activity – for instance, what will be produced?

For example: if the activity was a concert series and accompanying workshop programme, you might write ‘6 concerts and 12 workshops’ in the outputs column

Proposed targets and success measures (Column H-K):
Tell us what your targets and success measures are for each activity – what do you aim to achieve and what will the impact be?

For example: thinking about the previous concert and accompanying workshop example, you might write ‘average of 70% attendance across 6 concerts with 30% of audience new to the venue. 120 GCSE students attending 12 workshops; 70% stating workshop likely or highly likely to improve participant confidence for GCSEs.’

Activity location

In the Activity Plan, you will also be asked to tell us about the location of each of your activities and the number of days you estimate the activity to take place over. A separate location form will need to be completed for each activity entered:

- You will need to select the local authority area/s you plan to deliver the activity in (if in England)
- You will also be able to select UK or international options for any activity outside of England

- You select the location by providing an estimate of the number of days the activity will take place over in each relevant location. Please see our guidance on calculating the number of delivery days to help with this [see our website]
- If you are unsure about the location of your activity then you will be able to indicate this at a regional, UK and/or international level where applicable
- You will also be able to indicate any activities that do not have a specific delivery location (for example, digital performances, production of materials etc)
- You will also be able to indicate if you anticipate that your activity will take place across the whole of England

What we will consider when reviewing your response

We will assess your contribution to the Outcomes by reviewing your Activity Plan and your answer to the previous question on your plans for the three-year investment period together. We will consider the following:

- Is the plan clear and is it likely to make a strong impact on the public?
- Is the contribution to Outcomes and Elements clear and strong?
- Are any activities likely to make a particularly strong contribution to the Outcomes and Elements?
- Are the identified Outcomes and Elements a good fit for the organisation?
- Do the plans, targets and success measures appear both appropriately ambitious and achievable?
- Is there evidence that the activity is relevant to the people it aims to reach?
- Has the activity been developed in consultation with the communities and individuals it aims to reach?
- Does the applicant have the skills needed to deliver the proposed activity?

- Are there plans to develop the necessary skills and knowledge?
- Will the activity increase opportunities for, and engagement by, underserved communities – taking into account geography, protected characteristics and socio-economic status?
- Has talent development and progression for creative and cultural practitioners been considered?

We will apply a rating against each applicable Outcome:

- Strong contribution is likely
- Good contribution is likely
- Some contribution is likely
- Limited contribution is likely

Additional tips

To help you complete your Activity Plan for 2023/24, we have prepared **a video guide, a step-by-step how-to guide and a completed example of the template.**

We want to invest in more activity that benefits our **Priority Places**. If you are planning activity in 2023/24 that takes place in one or more of those places, then we advise you to include that in your list of (up to) 10 activities.

- **A video guide, a step-by-step how-to guide and a completed example of the template:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-3>
- **Priority Places:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/your-area/priority-places#section-1>

Embedding the Investment Principles

National Portfolio Organisations are required to demonstrate a commitment to embedding all of our Investment Principles in their work. Our four Investment Principles are:

- Inclusivity and Relevance
- Environmental Responsibility
- Dynamism
- Ambition and Quality

Each Investment Principle has three ‘core features’ [see our website].

Investment Principles Plan

The **Investment Principles Plan** is a separate template you will need to attach to your application form. You can **download it here**. The Investment Principles Plan is for you to tell us about how you plan to embed the four Investment Principles.

- **Download it here:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-3>

The information you need to provide in your response

The form has four separate sections, one for each Investment Principle.

For each Investment Principle you will need to:

- tell us about your **three-year ambition** for the Investment Principle and the success measures you will use to help you know you’ve achieved your goals (up to 300 characters)

- tell us what your **priorities** are for 2023/24 that will put you on a path to achieving your three-year ambition (up to 300 characters)
- set out the related **actions** you are going to take during 2023/24 in connection to the following four parts of your business:

Skills Development: the development of your workforce, leadership and governance to help you progress in relation to each Investment Principle.

In this section you can tell us about:

- staff development planning
- research and development you want to undertake to inform your planning, and/or
- partnerships you want to build on or develop to help you progress and think in new ways

People and Representation: the groups and expertise – both voluntary and paid – you have, or will bring together, that will collaborate with you on the actions you will take to make progress.

The actions you add here can cover:

- the subgroups you have or will put in place for your board or oversight group
- the way your team or partners will be deployed across your work on this Investment Principle, and/or
- collaboration with individuals (for example: mentors or advisors) or other organisations

It is important that you tell us how your governing body or oversight group is involved in monitoring your progress. Explain how you will be working with them to ensure they have robust data and good feedback from your team.

Planning: The plans and policies you have, or will create, to help you deliver your ambitions.

This is where you can tell us about the policies and plans that will set out the detail of your work. These may be policies you are writing to explicitly support a single Investment Principle, or a reference to an update you are making to an existing plan that has a direct connection to the work you are doing.

For example, this could be reviewing your existing recruitment policy to include a series of actions relating to Inclusivity and Relevance or writing a new action plan for Environmental Responsibility where you've not previously had one. Or you may also want to tell us that you're updating your business plan to incorporate new policies and plans.

Tools and Monitoring: the toolkits and resources that you will employ that will support you in setting, monitoring, and achieving targets and how you will report on progress to your governing body.

You should also use this section to tell us how and when you will report on your progress to your governing body. We will be looking for evidence in your board papers about this reporting so this section will help us know what to look for. We also want to know what tools you will be using to make progress and track progress.

For example:

You might sign up to a quality framework, like our **Insight and Impact Toolkit**, to help you with your work around Ambition and Quality. You should tell us what framework you plan to use, and how your governing body will be involved in reviewing your results.

Or

You might want to carry out some work on your decision-making processes. You can tell us here whether you're drawing on a particular support service for that work and how your board is involved in the procurement and evaluation of that project.

- **Insight and Impact Toolkit:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/impact-and-insight-toolkit>

For each of these four categories, you will be asked to indicate the stage each of your actions is at and the stage you expect it to be at following the first year of delivery, as follows:

- Planned – discussed and agreed but not yet actioned
- In progress – agreed with demonstratable actions under way
- Established – part of your work and progress is being tracked

For example, one of your actions might require a significant piece of research as you need an evidence base to refine your approach. In this case you would have a research related action in the Skills Development section that is 'Planned'. For the year-end stage, you may select 'In progress' or 'Established', depending on the length of time you expect this action to take to complete.

For example, if you are a leader in your field for Environmental Responsibility you can add in the highlights of your

‘Established’ activities, but if you are prioritising progress on Dynamism, that is where you add much of your ‘Planned’ activity.

When reviewing your response, we will consider

- Are the priorities and measures of success clear and do they appear well thought out?
- Are the priorities and measures of success a good fit for the organisation and do they show ambition?
- Will the actions that the organisation has planned for the first 12 months help the organisation make progress towards embedding the Investment Principles?
- Is there a sense of where the organisation is starting from and where they aim to be?
 - Does the organisation have baseline data?
 - Is the organisation aware of their strengths and weaknesses?
- Is there evidence that the organisation is challenging itself?
- Does the journey seem realistic?
- Have the organisational resources and capacity been taken into account in planning?
- Have they identified what toolkits and resources they are planning to use to support them and are they appropriate?
- Is there clear involvement of the applicant’s governing body or oversight group in both setting targets and monitoring progress?

Our assessment will consider the relevant information we have on your organisation, for example, for current National Portfolio Organisations, in relation to your track record on the Creative Case for Diversity. Read more about the **Creative Case for Diversity**.

- **Creative Case for Diversity:**

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/diversity/creative-case-diversity>

We will apply a rating against all four Investment Principles:

- Strong progress is likely
- Good progress is likely
- Some progress is likely
- Limited progress is likely

Additional tips

To help you complete your Investment Principles Plan, we have prepared **a video guide, a step-by-step how-to guide and a completed example of the template.**

- **A video guide, a step-by-step how-to guide and a completed example of the template:**

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-3>

When considering what toolkits and resources you will be using, look at our **Investment Principles resource hub** where you will be able to find information about the toolkits and resources that we will be providing for free. These are not mandatory, but we believe them to be high quality and appropriate for all National Portfolio Organisations to use. If you are offered funding, during the funding agreement negotiation we may ask you to explain why the toolkit or resources you are proposing to use are more appropriate for your organisation.

- **Investment Principles resource hub:**

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/explore-investment-principles>

It is important that you are open and honest about where you are now. We are more interested in how well you have planned your progression than how advanced you are at point of application. Where you are stating you are 'In progress' or 'Established', we may ask to see your evidence during the funding agreement negotiation phase if you are offered funding.

Financial information

In this section, we will ask you to attach a Financial information template, your financial statements and answer some questions about your organisation's finances.

The information you need to provide

In providing this financial information, you must:

- attach your financial statements for your previous financial year, prepared to the relevant legal standard for an organisation of your size and legal status
 - If your organisation has not been established long enough to have a set of financial statements, you should upload an explanatory statement.
 - If your organisation was previously trading in some other form, for example as a service within a local authority or if two or more organisations have recently merged, you should also upload an explanatory statement and, where applicable, financial statements for the previous financial year
 - If you are a consortium, you should provide the financial statements for the lead organisation
- provide your current reserves target (as set out in your organisation's reserves policy), explaining whether this relates to all of your organisation's unrestricted funds including designated funds, or just to free reserves (up to 500 characters)

- provide detail on any assumptions or exceptional items included in your budget which represent a significant variance to your organisation's previous annual budgeted/actual figures and tell us about any key risks (and mitigations) you have identified in relation to your budget (up to 3,000 characters)
- You can use this section to tell us about the impact that Covid-19 has had on your organisation's finances if applicable

Completing your Financial information template

We will also ask you to complete a Financial information template and attach it to your application form. You can **download it here**.

- **Download it here:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-3>

There are three sections in the Financial information template:

- Your organisation's balance sheet at 31 December 2021
- Your annual budget (a detailed budget for 2023/24, and an indicative budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26)
- Your cashflow forecast (for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)

For consortiums: the balance sheet should be for the lead organisation. The budget and cash flow forecast should be for the consortium activity.

In preparing this Financial information template, current National Portfolio Organisations must use the 'planning figure' they have been given.

Organisations that are not currently National Portfolio Organisations: new applicants should apply for a minimum of £50,000 per year.

If you intend to ask for a sum in any one year that is significantly different to the level in any other year, you must note the reasons why in your budget and in the application form question.

What we will consider when reviewing your response

From the balance sheet:

- How well does the organisation demonstrate solvency?
- Does the organisation hold an adequate level of unrestricted funds, (particularly general, and free reserves) to support them to deliver the activity they have applied for in the investment period?
- How well does the organisation demonstrate liquidity:
 - does the organisation have an adequate net current assets position (current assets minus current liabilities)?
 - how strong is the current ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities)? Note: a current ratio above 1 would be expected, with between 1.2 and 2 normally a good position and above 2 might suggest a strong position. A current ratio of below 1 would present a risk.
- Are there any risks specific to the organisation's business model and finances that may affect their financial position and ability to deliver the activity they have applied for, for example:
 - significant cash held from advance ticket sales
 - significant defined benefit pension scheme and other liabilities
 - assets predominantly held in fixed assets rather than current assets
 - significant bank loans or overdrafts?

From the budget:

- How well does the budget demonstrate adequate financial planning, including impact of the budget on reserves?
- How well does the budget demonstrate appropriate consideration of the financial needs of the activity the organisation has applied for:
 - are plans accurately represented in financial terms?
 - how well does the budget demonstrate value for money?
 - are income and expenditure reasonable and appropriate for the proposed activity?

From the cash flow forecast:

- Are there any forecast cash deficits that might suggest future liquidity issues?
 - to what extent is this due to forecast financial issues or due to profiling of income and expenditure?
- To what extent are cash income and expenditure profiled appropriately and at an appropriate level for the activity they have applied for?
- Are cash levels sustained by restricted funds rather than unrestricted funds?
 - consider where this may pose a risk in relation to appropriate use of funds and/or lack of available unrestricted cash

When reviewing your financial information, we will carry out a **risk assessment** to see if there are any weaknesses and threats to your organisation's financial viability.

As part of our risk assessment, we will apply a rating:

- Minor
- Moderate
- Major

Additional tips

To help you complete your Financial information template, we have prepared **a video guide, a step-by-step how-to guide and a completed example of the template.**

- **A video guide, a step-by-step how-to guide and a completed example of the template:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-4>

Your budget should be comprehensive, appropriate and suitable for the scale and type of programme you are proposing. Your budget 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, although we recognise that the ability and capacity for different organisations to generate funds from other sources will vary. We do expect organisations to generate reasonable levels of income from other sources, however, and your budgets should clearly illustrate estimated income.

We would expect National Portfolio Organisations to work to a budget that at least has a small surplus at the end of the funding period.

Please make sure that, within your budget, payments to all staff and freelancers are calculated in line with our guidelines on Fair Pay [see our website]. If your application is successful, we may ask you to provide full details.

Additional investment request

This section will only appear for current National Portfolio Organisations that have selected to apply for additional investment over and above their planning figure.

If you would like to request additional investment, you should provide a statement and costed breakdown detailing what the additional investment would be used for (up to 10,000 characters).

The information you need to provide in your response

You should set out how you would use the additional investment to strengthen the delivery of our Outcomes.

What we will consider when reviewing your response

We will consider your proposal for additional investment in terms of how well we believe it will enable us to make progress in delivering our Outcomes and their Elements. In reviewing your response we will also consider the extent to which we believe your proposal represents good value for money (including whether it will leverage other investment).

You should note that we currently plan to use increased awards to help us achieve our ambition of investing in National Portfolio Organisations that are more that is more representative of this country. We will take into account the geographical location of organisations and the profile of their governance and leadership (in terms of both protected characteristics and socio-economic status). In particular, we aim to increase investment in **our Priority Places** through a combination of the following:

- support for organisations already based in Priority Places
- supporting organisations to relocate to Priority Places
- support for new activity that has been co-designed in partnership with Priority Places

- **Our Priority Places:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/your-area/priority-places#section-1>

Additional tips

This request for additional investment does not have to be structured as a ‘one off’ project (although it could be). It can also be used to build the core business. In setting out how this additional investment would help your organisation deliver more effectively against Let’s Create, please make sure that you use the main part of the application to tell us about how you will deliver against the Let’s Create Outcomes, their Elements and how you will embed the Investment Principles. If you submit an application that only proposes delivery against our Outcomes if you receive additional investment over and above your planning figure, it will be rejected.

Monitoring information

In this section of the application form, we will ask for data about the profile of your organisation’s senior management and board, all of which we will use in our reporting and some of which we will use to support our balancing process as specified in the Balancing criteria section of this guidance. You can see the data we will ask for in the Word version.

After you submit your application

Please note that, once you have submitted your application, you must not approach the Arts Council to discuss your application. This includes both our staff and the members of our Area and National Councils.

We will contact you through Grantium if we need any more information and to tell you if we are making a conditional offer of investment.

When we receive your application, we will first check whether it is eligible. If your application is not eligible, this means that we cannot process it any further and we will not consider it for funding. We will tell you using our online system, Grantium, and will explain our decision.

How will you make a decision on my application?

If your application is eligible, we will then carry out an assessment. We will look at your organisation and the proposed activity against the assessment criteria.

Assessment criteria

1. **Access and excellence:** your organisation's track record in access and excellence in creativity and culture, and how that makes you well-placed to make a strong contribution to **Let's Create** in the next national portfolio
2. **Outcomes:** the quality of your contribution to our three Outcomes, including their relevant Elements

3. **Investment Principles:** your plans to embed each of the four Investment Principles, and how well evidenced your approach is to setting targets, and tracking and measuring your progress

• **Let's Create:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate>

To assess your application, we will use the questions in the **‘Completing your application’ section (page 20)** of this guidance. Using those prompts, we will write statements on how well your application meets the above criteria.

We will apply a rating against each applicable Outcome:

- Strong contribution is likely
- Good contribution is likely
- Some contribution is likely
- Limited contribution is likely

We will apply a rating against each of the four Investment Principles:

- Strong progress is likely
- Good progress is likely
- Some progress is likely
- Limited progress is likely

We will also carry out a **risk assessment** of your application to see if there are any weaknesses and threats to:

- your ability to lead and manage the programme of work that you propose
- your organisation's financial viability

We will apply a rating of ‘minor’, ‘moderate’ or ‘major’ to the types of risk above. If your application is successful, we will use this risk assessment to help tailor a monitoring plan suitable for your proposal.

We expect to work more closely with applicants with major risk ratings during the funding agreement negotiation stage.

We will make our assessment based on the information you provide in your application and our knowledge of your organisation if you have previously been a National Portfolio Organisation or received other funding from us. We may refer to publicly available information, such as your organisation's website or records held at Companies House or the Charity Commission, or discuss your application with other Lottery distributors, to assist us in our assessment of your application. We will also consider any further information that we have specifically asked you to provide.

When assessing applications from current National Portfolio Organisations we will take evidence of your current performance into account.

Our balancing process

We expect to receive many more strong applications than we can fund. This means that we will go through a process of 'balancing' to make our final decisions to ensure we are achieving the strongest spread of investment against the applications we receive. Our 'balancing criteria' provide a framework which we will use to judge how organisations individually and collectively might contribute to the delivery of Let's Create. We may decide to invest in organisations depending on contributions they are making across the range of our balancing criteria.

Balancing criteria

1. We want to invest in organisations that are more representative of the geography of England, both in terms of where organisations are based and where they will be delivering their activity. We will take into account:

- **our Priority Places**
- **places of historically low Arts Council investment**
- **places of historically low cultural engagement**
- the spread across the country and between rural, towns and cities

- **Our Priority Places:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/your-area/priority-places#section-1>
- **Places of historically low Arts Council investment:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/your-area/priority-places#section-2>
- **Places of historically low cultural engagement:** <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/your-area/priority-places#section-2>

2. We want to invest in organisations where the leadership and governance of organisations is more representative of England in relation to disability, race, sex and includes more people from lower socio- economic backgrounds. Evidence in our Equality Analysis shows that disabled people, women and people from some racial/ethnic groups are currently underrepresented in the leadership and governance of our national portfolio.

Using the monitoring information, you provide in your application form, we will take into account:

- whether your organisation is **diverse led**.

- to consider this question, we will use the data you provide about your organisation's board and senior management and analyse it across a range of protected characteristics, as well as socio-economic background.
- by 'diverse led' we mean that 51% or more of your board or senior management team are Black, Asian or Ethnically diverse or disabled or female or from a lower socio-economic background.
- how **representative** of contemporary England your board and senior management team are in relation to disability, race and sex, as well as socio-economic background.
 - to consider this question, we will use the data you provide about your board and senior management and analyse it by reference to disability, race and sex, as well as socio-economic background
- how **representative** of contemporary England the **individuals** that lead your organisation are
 - to consider this question, we will use the data you provide about your organisation's Chief Executive, Artistic Director, Executive Director, Chairperson or equivalent positions and analyse it by reference to disability, race, sex and socio-economic background

3. When making our investment decisions, we will want to support a wide range of creative and cultural provision. We will take into account:

- the range of artforms and disciplines, including ensuring we have a good balance between arts organisations and museums and libraries
- the types of organisations including building based, touring, festivals etc
- the spread of activity across our Outcomes and their Elements
- the spread of support offered by organisations applying to support others to embed the Investment Principles

Who will make the final decision on my application?

Final decisions on National Portfolio Organisation programme applications will be made by the members of our Area and National Councils.

When will you tell me about your decision?

We will tell you by **15 October 2022** whether you have been made a conditional offer of investment and if you have, how much investment we are offering you for 2023/24 and indicative amounts for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Arts Council England can only guarantee future instalments of the grant as long as sufficient funds from the Government or the National Lottery are available to it. It is possible that the indicative amounts may therefore be reduced for future instalments.

Any offer of investment will be conditional and subject to successful funding agreement negotiation.

When we have made you a conditional offer of investment, we will need to agree final Activity (Outcomes) and Investment Principles plans with you which will form part of your funding agreement. The funding agreement will set out mutually agreed targets and success measures for how an organisation will embed our Investment Principles and deliver agreed Outcomes.

What happens if we are not successful?

We are likely to receive more good applications for National Portfolio Organisation programme investment than we can fund. We recognise that it will be disappointing for any organisations who are unsuccessful in their applications.

For organisations that are not currently National Portfolio Organisations

We will be able to provide you with feedback and suggest possible alternate sources of Arts Council funding including **National Lottery Project Grants**.

- **National Lottery Project Grants:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/ProjectGrants>

For current National Portfolio Organisations

We will be able to provide you with feedback and suggest possible sources of alternate Arts Council funding including **National Lottery Project Grants**.

- **National Lottery Project Grants:**
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/ProjectGrants>

To facilitate your exit from being a National Portfolio Organisation, we may agree transition funding with you (based on a proportion of your 2022/23 investment). You will be invited to submit a plan demonstrating need and how this funding would be used.

How do we make a complaint?

Following decisions for this programme, we will have a process that you will be able to use if you would like to make a complaint about either the service you have received from Arts Council England or the way we have handled your application.

If you believe we made a mistake and you want to make a complaint, you can find out about **our complaints procedure on our website**. A bespoke complaints process will also be used for decisions from this programme. This process will be published on this web page before the application deadline. Please note, however, that Arts Council England doesn't operate an appeals process. We cannot consider concerns through our formal process where we have followed our processes correctly.

- **Our complaints procedure on our website:**

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/making-complaint>

Should you want to complain, you can also contact our Complaints Managers for further advice by emailing **complaints@artscouncil.org.uk**

Counter fraud measures

Arts Council England has a Counter Fraud Strategy and Policy and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that grant holders given funding through this programme use the funding appropriately. This will include random sampling checks on a proportion of grants made. All grant holders must retain their financial and other documentation relating to the grant, and Arts

Council England reserves the right to request this at any time. In addition, Arts Council England will complete checks pre- and post-award against grant applicants for due diligence and counter fraud purposes.

Subsidy Control

As of 1 January 2021, EU state aid rules no longer apply in the UK for new subsidies awarded after that date, except where the grant funding will affect trade between Northern Ireland and the EU as envisaged by Article 10 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland in the EU Withdrawal Agreement.

The UK has entered into a Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU which contains certain Subsidy Control provisions which govern the award of subsidies by UK public authorities that may affect trade or investment between the UK and the EU.

The current rules are explained in BEIS' guidance, **Technical guidance on the UK's international subsidy control commitments**. Further legislation and guidance in this area is expected in the coming months. The Arts Council reserves the right to introduce new requirements and/or additional conditions based on any new emerging detail which will have an impact on this funding programme.

- **Technical guidance on the UK's international subsidy control commitments:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complying-with-the-uks-international-obligations-on-subsidy-control-guidance-for-public-authorities/technical-guidance-on-the-uks-international-subsidy-control-commitments>

You must ensure that the grant funding awarded to you is compliant with any legislation on Subsidy Control applicable at the time the grant is awarded. You must provide any information we request in order to satisfy us that you have considered the Subsidy Control rules and that the grant is compliant. You may be required to repay any grant monies you receive with interest if the grant breaches the Subsidy Control rules.

Freedom of Information Act

We are 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 decisions about investment. We are also listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This means that, by law, we may have to share your application documents and information about our assessment with any member of the public who asks to see them 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.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request** 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 our decision-making.

Contact us

Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

Web: artscouncil.org.uk

Post: Arts Council England

The Hive, 49 Lever Street

Manchester

M1 1FN

Telephone: 0161 934 4317

You can also **Livechat** with us by visiting our website:
artscouncil.org.uk

Useful links

Here you can find a summary of all the web pages we link to throughout this Guidance for Applicants.

Background reading:

- Let's Create:
artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate
- Our Delivery Plan for 2021-24:
artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/delivery-plan-2021-2024
- Our Investment Principles:
artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/explore-investment-principles
- The remit of Arts Council England:
artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries
- Our definitions of 'creativity' and 'culture':
artscouncil.org.uk/strategy-2020-2030/our-vision

- Our Equality Objectives:
[artscouncil.org.uk/our-delivery-plan-2021-2024/equality-objectives](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-delivery-plan-2021-2024/equality-objectives)
- Guidance for Applicants – for organisations applying to support others to embed our Investment Principles (IPSOs):
[artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-2](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-2)
- UK Museum Accreditation Scheme:
[artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/uk-museum-accreditation-scheme](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/uk-museum-accreditation-scheme)

Preparing your application:

- Access Support information sheet:
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>
- Equality and Fair Pay information sheet:
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>
- Supporting Practitioners information sheet:
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>
- The Importance of Good Governance information sheet:
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/2023-26-investment-programme/MakingYourApplication#section-4>
- Book onto a digital briefing session:
No link yet
- Introductory conversations:
No link yet
- Frequently Asked Questions:
[artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/frequently-asked-questions-national-portfolio-organisations2023#section-1](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/frequently-asked-questions-national-portfolio-organisations2023#section-1)
- Elements for each of Let's Create's three Outcomes:
[artscouncil.org.uk/delivery-plan-2021-2024/introduction](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/delivery-plan-2021-2024/introduction)

- Investment Principles resource hub:
arts council.org.uk/lets-create/explore-investment-principles
- Core features of the Investment Principles:
No link yet
- Governance: Working with the Investment Principles:
arts council.org.uk/publication/governance-working-investment-principles
- Our priority places:
arts council.org.uk/your-area/priority-places#section-1
- Places of historically low Arts Council investment:
arts council.org.uk/your-area/priority-places#section-2
- Places of historically low cultural engagement:
arts council.org.uk/your-area/priority-places#section-2
- Insight and Impact Toolkit:
arts council.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/impact-and-insight-toolkit
- Creative Case for Diversity:
arts council.org.uk/diversity/creative-case-diversity
- Equality Act 2010: guidance:
gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance
- Guidelines on Fair Pay:
No link yet
- Guidance on Preparing a Partnership Agreement:
arts council.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE_Partnership_Agreements_Guidance_August_2014.pdf
- Guidance on the UK's international subsidy control commitments:
gov.uk/government/publications/complying-with-the-uks-international-obligations-on-subsidy-control-guidance-for-public-authorities/technical-guidance-on-the-uks-international-subsidy-control-commitments

Making your application:

- Our application portal, Grantium:
artscouncil.org.uk/get-funding/our-application-portal-grantium
- How to set up and manage an applicant profile on Grantium:
artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/grantium-support#section-2
- Word version of the application form:
artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-2
- Activity Plan for Outcomes template, video guide, how-to guide and completed example:
artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-3
- Investment Principles Plan template, video guide, how-to guide and completed example:
artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-3
- Financial information template, video guide, how-to guide and completed example –:
artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2023-onwards/making-your-application#section-4

Other funding and support:

- Our open funds:
artscouncil.org.uk/funding
- National Lottery Project Grants:
artscouncil.org.uk/ProjectGrants
- Developing your Creative Practice:
artscouncil.org.uk/DYCP

- Making a complaint:
artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/making-complaint
- Making a Freedom of Information request:
No link yet

Transcribed into Large Print by: A2i Transcription Services
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We welcome feedback so please get in touch!
Ref number: 34659