Opera Projects and Production Award 2021

Guidelines for Applicants
for project activities commencing on or after 1 January 2021,
and productions presented in 2021.
Deadline: 5.30pm, Thursday 30 April 2020

CONTENTS

Application checklist
Getting help with your application
1. About the Opera Projects and Production Award
   1.1 Objectives and priorities of the award
   1.2 Who can apply?
   1.3 Who is the applicant?
   1.4 Who cannot apply?
   1.5 How much may you apply for?
   1.6 What may you not apply for?
   1.7 What supporting material must you submit with your application?
   1.8 Eligibility
2. Making your application
   2.1 Register with the Arts Council’s Online Services
   2.2 Fill in the application form
   2.3 Prepare any supporting material required for the application
   2.4 Make your application online
3. Processing and assessment of applications
   3.1 Overview
   3.2 Assessment process
   3.3 Criteria for the assessment of applications
   3.4 Peer panel
   3.5 Outcome of applications
Application checklist

Use the checklists below to make sure that your application is complete.

**Items that are mandatory for all applications** *(check all of these items)*

- [ ] I/we have filled in all of the sections of the application form relevant to my application.
- [ ] I/we have prepared all required supporting material (as outlined in section 1.7 below), and have this ready to upload.

**Items that are mandatory for certain applications** *(check those that apply to your application)*

- [ ] My/our proposal involves work that is aimed at/involves the participation of children and or young people aged seventeen and under. I understand that if my application is successful, as a condition of funding I will be required to confirm and demonstrate that I have suitable child-protection policies and procedures in place. (Please see [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) for more information.)
- [ ] My/our proposal involves working with vulnerable persons, and I have submitted an acknowledgement that I adhere to the *National Policy & Procedures on Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse* at [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie).
- [ ] My/our proposal involves working with animals, and I have submitted a copy of my/our *Animal Welfare Protection Policies and Procedures*.

**Other items that I consider relevant to my application** *(check those that apply to your application)*

- [ ] My/our proposal relies on the expertise of other named people or organisations, and I have a document detailing those people and their expertise ready to upload.
- [ ] My/our proposal includes other material relevant to my application, which I have ready to upload.

**Second opinion** *(check this item)*

- [ ] I/we have asked someone else to check over my application to make sure there are no errors and that nothing is missing.
Getting help with your application

- The Arts Council makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities who wish to submit an application or who have difficulties in accessing Online Services. If you have a requirement in this area, please contact the Arts Council’s Access Officer, Adrienne Martin, by phone (01 6180219) or by email (adrienne.martin@artscouncil.ie) at least three weeks in advance of the deadline day.

- If you have a technical query about using the Online Services website, you can email onlineservices@artscouncil.ie

- Answers to common questions about using Online Services are available in the FAQ section of the Arts Council website at http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/FAQ/online-services.aspx

- To watch our YouTube guide on making an application, go to http://www.youtube.com/artscouncildemos

- If you require assistance with the content of your application, call the Arts Council on 01 6180200 or email awards@artscouncil.ie
1. About the Opera Projects and Production Award

1.1 Objectives and priorities of the award

The objective of the Opera Projects and Production Award is to support initiatives by professional practitioners in the development and presentation of opera at three distinct stages, encouraging both the development of work of high artistic quality, and also fully staged presentations of opera that engage with the public, providing opportunities for artists in the process.

The award is intended to support the making and presentation of opera in line with the Arts Council's published policy and strategy for opera (available to download from the publications section of the Arts Council website: http://www.artscouncil.ie).

In each of the three strands of the award, priority will be given to applications that demonstrate:

- A clear artistic vision and evidence that the proposed project is or is likely to be of high artistic quality; the track record of key artists will be taken into account
- Significant development opportunities for professional opera practitioners
- A clear alignment with the Council’s policy and strategy priorities for opera.

Additional priorities for each of the three strands are also set out below.

Strand 1: Opera Projects: Development

The purpose of the Project Development strand is to support artists and creative teams to develop new work (or, on occasion, develop significant new presentation approaches to existing work). In this strand, while the work should be ultimately intended for public presentation, there is not a requirement to present the work to an audience.

Priority in this strand will also be given to proposals that:

- Focus on collaboratively developing new ideas through innovation and experimentation
- Deliver significant development opportunities to practitioners
- Provide evidence of a high quality artistic focus. The track record of the key artists will be taken into account.

Strand 2: Opera Projects: Developmental Presentation

The primary purposes of this strand are to:

- Facilitate the public presentation of work as part of a developmental creative process
- To provide evidence and impetus to support later opportunities for full production
- To support full production and presentation of small-scale work.

Projects in this strand must engage an audience appropriate for the nature of the work. Proposals may be for a full production, workshop performance or a concert performance of all or part of a work. Proposals can include, as appropriate, an audio or video recording as part of the project. Applicants are encouraged to consider reaching audiences by a variety of means.
Individual applicants to this strand must be able to clearly demonstrate that the project (including its public-presentation aspect) is feasible, ideally on the basis of a partnership commitment from an experienced producer such as a producing company, a theatre/venue, an established festival and/or another arts organisation.

Priority in this strand will be given to proposals that:

- Are high-quality artistic projects that demonstrate a strong and imaginative approach; relevant samples of work and the track record of the key artists involved will be taken into account
- Involve the development and presentation of new opera
- Involve the preparation and public presentation of new performing editions of historic Irish opera
- Are presented to an appropriate public, with a clear plan for reaching that public
- Demonstrate evidence of a capacity to realise the project successfully – e.g. by the contribution of value-adding partnerships and evidence of sound production planning and budgeting

**Strand 3: Opera Production**

The purpose of the Opera Production strand is to support full productions of complete operas of either new or existing work of medium or larger scale of any genre, reaching and engaging with substantial live and other audiences, and providing opportunities for professional operatic artists in the process.

In reaching that audience, the emphasis of the award is on encouraging a collaborative approach to high quality opera production based on value-adding partnerships between artists, producers and presenters.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate the potential quality of the production and demonstrate concrete, credible strategies and plans to maximise public reach and engagement through live performance and other audience channels.

In considering proposals, the Arts Council will take into account a balance in the range and type of opera to be funded, and the extent to which proposals address areas of repertoire and public engagement of importance to the Arts Council as expressed in the Council’s opera policy and strategy.

Priority in this strand will be given to proposals that:

- Are high-quality production proposals that demonstrate a strong and imaginative approach (relevant samples of work and the track record of the key artists involved will be taken into account)
- Evidence a clear commitment and well-grounded, detailed plans to maximise public reach and engagement, both in terms of live audiences and audiences reached through other means
- Provide opera repertoire that meets particular audience need as part of a balanced national opera provision
- Proposals that reach particular audiences as part of a balanced national spatial and demographic provision
- Demonstrate appropriate experience, sound planning and budgeting of opera production
- Show strong and credible plans for maximising production income from sources other than Council funding
- Use feasible, efficient models of production with appropriate value-adding partners.

Funding requests in Strand 3 that are less than €50,000 should instead apply to Strand 2.


### 1.2 Who can apply?

To be eligible to apply, applicants must be resident/based in the Republic of Ireland. There are certain exceptions where the Arts Council may deem eligible applications made by those residing/based outside the Republic of Ireland. However, before admitting as eligible any such application, the Arts Council would need to be satisfied that the outcomes of any such proposal would benefit the arts in the Republic of Ireland.

In line with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, the Arts Council is committed to ensuring that it takes positive policy measures to promote equality of opportunity for all those living in Ireland, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community. Furthermore, the Arts Council notes the ground of socio-economic background as a further basis for which equality of opportunity must be guaranteed. The Arts Council therefore welcomes applications that are representative of the diversity of Irish society, including but not limited to any of the characteristics outlined above.

While opera producers in receipt of Strategic Funding are not eligible to apply, other organisations (such as producing venues) in receipt of Strategic Funding or Arts Grant Funding may apply, provided that any activity and related funding is demonstrated to be additional to, and separate from, the activities for which that organisation has received Strategic Funding or Arts Grant Funding.

While opera producers in receipt of Strategic Funding are not eligible to apply, it is expected that these may play a role in supporting or partnering with applicants for the Opera Presentation strand of the award (and may also play a supporting role in the Opera Development strands). In such instances, the applicant and the supporting funded producer must verify that the support offered and the proposed role of the funded organisation is additional to, and separate from, the activities for which that organisation has received Strategic Funding, and that the funded opera producer will not publicly or otherwise present the work as its own production or co-production.

### 1.3 Who is the applicant?

The applicant is the person or organisation that will receive any grant offered and that will be required to accept the terms and conditions of that grant.

Applications being prepared by agents, managers, management companies or consultants on behalf of artists or arts organisations should be submitted by the artist(s) or performer(s) or organisation(s) concerned.

Any grant offered will only be paid into a bank account held in the name of the applicant.
All documentation provided must be in the name of the applicant (individual artist or arts organisation). For example, if you apply to the Arts Council for funding under the name Máire de Barra, then all documentation, including bank and tax details, must be in that name. Variations such as Mary Barry or Barry Studios are not acceptable.

1.4 Who cannot apply?
Applicants who are not eligible to apply include the following:

- Opera producers who are in receipt of Strategic Funding (see notes in section 1.2 above on support from Strategic Funding opera producers)
- Individuals or organisations who do not have a demonstrable track record as professional artists/producers/organisations
- Individuals who are currently in undergraduate or postgraduate education or who will be during the period for which this award is offered.

1.5 What may you apply for?
There are three bands of funding available corresponding to the three strands of the Opera Projects and Production Award:

- Strand 1: Opera Development: up to a **maximum** of €20,000
- Strand 2: Opera Developmental Presentation: up to a **maximum** of €110,000
- Strand 3: Opera Production: up to a **maximum** of €450,000 (Note: full production funding requests for less than €50,000 should instead apply to Strand 2).

Please note that amounts of this maximum order are more likely to be the exception than the norm in each strand.

In making your application you should be realistic in specifying the funding you are seeking. This amount must be the difference between the estimated costs of the project or productions and a reasonable projection of revenue from different sources, as appropriate. You will need to demonstrate clearly how other income streams (where relevant) will contribute to the feasibility of your proposal.

Applicants may submit more than one application to a single OPP round, provided applications are for different projects/productions in different strands. You must clearly indicate which strand you are applying for in section 1.5 of the application form.

Applicants should also note that success in funding for strands 1 or 2 is not a guarantee of success or an indication of increased likelihood of success for any subsequent applications to develop that project further in strands 2 or 3.

In addition to the normal limits stated above, the Arts Council will also consider costs specifically relating to the making of work by artists with disabilities. If you wish to apply for additional funding on this basis, you should provide information with your application outlining what these additional costs are.

**How much funding should you apply for?**

In applying for Opera Projects and Production Award funding, you are required to submit a budget listing all items of income and expenditure relating to your proposed project. A summary budget is included in the application form, and the type of **separate, detailed budgets required for strands 2 & 3**, and optional in strand 1, are specified in section 1.7.

The maximum amount you may request is the difference between the **proposed expenditure** and the **proposed income** you indicate in the budget.
Opera Projects and Production Award: Guidelines for Applicants

- Proposed expenditure should include all fees*, wages, technical costs, promotion and publicity costs, administrative costs, etc.
- Proposed income should include what you expect to receive from other funders, sponsors, box-office receipts, donors, programme sales, etc.

It is also important to reflect all in-kind** support in both income and expenditure, so reflecting the full and true value of your proposal.

*Note on artists’ pay

The Arts Council is committed to improving the pay and conditions of artists. We have published a policy on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists. It is important that you read this policy in advance of making your application. You will be asked as part of the application process to set out how you will ensure proper pay and conditions for the artists that you work with. This will help us assess the feasibility of your application.

**Note on in-kind support

If you expect to receive in-kind support, you need to put a financial value on it so that the contribution it makes to the real value of your proposal is clear. You should think of in-kind support both as expenditure and as income: whatever amount you declare on the expenditure side, you should also declare on the income side.

Time contributed by directors or board members may not be reckoned as an in-kind cost.

You are asked to indicate income, expenditure and amount requested at three stages during your application:

- Online, when you initiate the application (totals only)
- In section 3 of the application form (summary budget)
- On any detailed budget that you submit as part of your application (compulsory for strands 2 and 3, optional for strand 1).

Make sure that the totals are the same on all three, and make sure that the amount requested equals TOTAL EXPENDITURE minus TOTAL INCOME.

1.6 What you may not apply for?

Activities and costs that you may not apply for include the following:

- Major capital purchases
- Ongoing core costs not specific to the project or production in question
- Activities or costs that do not fit the purpose of the award
- Activities that are more suited to another award funded by the Arts Council or operated by other state agencies, such as Culture Ireland
- Activities that have already taken place or which will have commenced before 1 January 2021
- Projects or productions that are part of, or adjunct to, the formal education of students in schools, colleges or third-level educational institutions
- Activities undertaken for charity fundraising purposes, for participation in a competition, for exclusively or predominantly private or invited audience(s), or for primarily profit-making purposes
- Activities that have already been assessed by the Arts Council, except in cases where the Council has specifically advised you to redirect your application to this award; please
bear in mind, however, that you should not regard such advice as an indication of likely success in your application.

1.7 What supporting material must you submit with your application?

In addition to, and separate from, your application form, in order to be considered eligible for assessment for an Opera Projects and Production Award, you must submit the following supporting material online:

- **All strands**: detailed up-to-date CVs (max. three pages) for the principal artists involved in the proposed project
- **All strands**: sound recordings and/or video files demonstrating recent work by the company and/or key artistic personnel. Weblinks to audio/video files stored on YouTube are acceptable in addition to, or in lieu of, directly submitted sound/video files
- **All strands**: if your proposal involves working with vulnerable persons, you must provide a copy of your *Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policies and Procedures* (for more information, please see *National Policy & Procedures on Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse* at www.hse.ie)
- **All strands**: if your proposal involves working with animals, you must provide a copy of your *Animal Welfare Protection Policies and Procedures*
- **All strands (where relevant)**: evidence of any financial support or sponsorship identified in the project budget – e.g. a memorandum of understanding, a letter of offer, a statement of support, or a similar document
- **All strands (where relevant)**: letter/documentation of support from any significant partnering organisations or individuals
- **All strands (where relevant)**: if music scores are being submitted in support of an application, these should be presented in a standard electronic-reading format (such as PDF)
- **Strand 2**: a separate, detailed budget setting out proposed income and expenditure for the project; this should be in an Excel spreadsheet document. **Note**: this is in addition to the summary budget contained in the application form.
- **Strand 3**: a completed opera-production budget – for this you must use the latest version of the Arts Council’s budget template, which you can download from the Opera Projects and Production page of the Arts Council website (http://www.artscouncil.ie/Funds/Opera-Projects-and-Production-Award/). **Note**: this is in addition to the summary budget contained in the application form.

If you do not submit the relevant required supporting material, your application will be deemed ineligible.

**Optional supporting material**

In addition to the required supporting material listed above, you may also submit any other material you consider relevant to your application. Please exercise judgement in limiting the amount of additional material.

**Format for supporting material**

All supporting material for the Opera Projects and Production Award must be submitted online. Hard-copy supporting material will not be accepted. Please follow these guidelines for the different kinds of supporting material.

Include contextual information for all supporting material in a clearly labelled text file.

| Video files | For any video files you submit, you must provide relevant contextual information. |
This might include details of the piece, when and where it was performed, thematic/general comments, the names of performers, and how the work was financed (e.g. award, self-financed).

Extracts should be no more than three minutes long, and no more than three relevant extracts should be submitted.

**Music or sound recordings**

Give the names of performers, and detail the instrumentation where appropriate.

Please title the files accurately using the following naming convention: Composer(s) – performer(s)/ensemble – track name. Audio extracts should be no more than three minutes long, and no more than three relevant extracts should be submitted.

1.8 **Eligibility**

Your application will be deemed ineligible, and will not go any further in the process, if any of the following is true:

1. You miss the application deadline
2. You fail to complete all of the sections in the application form relevant to your proposal
3. You cannot apply as set out in sections 1.2 to 1.4 above
4. You apply for an amount of funding greater than the maximum amount allowed for within the award to which you are applying as set out in section 1.5 above
5. You apply for an activity or purpose that you cannot apply for as set out in section 1.6 above
6. You fail to provide all mandatory supporting materials as set out in section 1.7 above
7. Your application is better suited to another funding programme offered by the Arts Council or by another funding agency (in this case, we will redirect you to the more appropriate funding opportunity).

**Note:** in the event that your application is ruled ineligible, it will not be assessed, and you will be permitted to apply again with the same proposal in future funding rounds. If you do reapply, you should ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements.
2. Making your application

2.1 Register with the Arts Council’s Online Services

All applications must be made through the Arts Council’s Online Services; applications made in any other way (by post, fax or email) will not be accepted.

You must have an Online Services account to make an application. If you do not already have an Online Services account, sign up by filling out the registration form here: https://onlineservices.artscouncil.ie/register.aspx.

Within five working days you will be issued (via email) with a unique ARN (artist reference number) and password that you can use to sign in to Online Services.

Requirements for using Online Services

Your computer and Internet browser will need to meet the following requirements to use Online Services successfully:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PC</th>
<th>Windows 7 or higher with Internet Explorer 8.0 or higher OR Firefox 27 or higher OR Chrome 33 or higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mac</td>
<td>Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard or higher with Safari 3.1 or Safari 10 OR Firefox 27 or higher OR Chrome 32 or higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: if Safari 11 prevents upload of documents, upgrade the Safari browser or use Firefox or Chrome

Note: you will also need to have Microsoft Word or OpenOffice Writer installed to complete the application form. OpenOffice Writer is free software that can be downloaded from here: http://openoffice.org.

You must use OpenOffice Writer version 4.0.1 or earlier

More recent versions of OpenOffice Writer than 4.0.1 have resulted in problems with the appearance of application forms when they are submitted through online services.

Please refer to the Arts Council video Using OpenOffice to download, complete and upload the application form at https://www.youtube.com/user/ArtsCouncilDemos.

Apple Mac users should take note of the section that deals with the issue of downloading version 4.0.1 on Macs that have the latest versions of Mac OS installed.

Note: for MacOS 10.15 Catalina, please use OpenOffice 4.1.7.

If you cannot meet, or do not understand, any of these requirements, please contact us for advice as far as possible in advance of the deadline.

Technical support

If you need technical support while making an online application, you can contact the Arts Council by emailing onlineservices@artscouncil.ie or by phoning 01 6180200. We recommend you report any technical issues with us well in advance of the deadline. Please provide a contact phone number and make sure that you are available to receive a return call from us.
We deal with queries on a first-come first-served basis.

Please note that there is often a high volume of calls as the deadline approaches, and that technical-support calls received after 2.30pm on the closing date may not be resolved before the deadline.

2.2 Fill in the application form

If you have not already done so, download the application form for the award you wish to apply for. The application form is a Microsoft Word/OpenOffice Writer-compatible document that you fill in offline (on your own computer). The application form includes guidance on how to fill in each of its sections.

Making your case

In order to make the very best case for why you should receive an award, you should give very careful consideration to what you include in the following sections of the application form:

| 2.2 Summary of your proposal | Give a summary of your proposal (up to three short points). Should your application be successful, this summary will be published on the Who We've Funded pages of the Arts Council website – for that reason, you should keep in mind that what you write may have a wider audience beyond the Arts Council assessors. |
| 2.3 Detail of your proposal | What you write here is a key part of your proposal, and should help those involved in assessing your application to understand the full scope of what you want to do, how and why. It is important to cover both the artistic and practical aspects of your proposal. This should include details of the key personnel involved, your artistic goals and ambitions, the wider context in which you are making the proposal, and any other information you consider relevant. It should also include practical details such as schedules, information on key partners, and any other administrative, technical or financial details you consider relevant. |
| 2.4 Your application and the assessment criteria | Describe how your application meets each of the assessment criteria for an Opera Projects and Production Award – see section 3.3 Criteria for the assessment of applications |

2.3 Prepare any supporting material required for the application

You are required to include supporting material with your application; see

With the single exception of music scores, all supporting material must be submitted online. So, if necessary, you need to scan or save material in electronic format.

Acceptable file formats

The following table lists file formats that are acceptable as part of an application for an Opera Projects and Production Award.
For convenience, gather together all the files you need in an accessible location on your computer.

**Submitting video links**

You may provide links to material hosted on YouTube instead of uploading the material directly. To do this, copy the URL (the full address of where your material is hosted on YouTube) into a Microsoft Word or OpenOffice Writer document and upload it as a weblink-supporting document.

**Note:** any links you provide must be for YouTube. Links to other hosting sites or your own website will not be viewed.

Check that the link works from within the document you upload – i.e. that it links correctly to your material on YouTube.

If you do not wish material you upload to YouTube for the purposes of your application to be publicly viewable, you can flag your video as ‘unlisted’ in its settings.

**Naming files appropriately**

Give all files that you intend to upload filenames that make it clear what they contain or represent. For example, it should be clear from the filename whether the document is a CV, a sample text or a review of previous work.

Please submit artistic materials and other supporting documents (including budget and CVs) in separate, appropriately named files.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good filenames for an applicant called Jack Russell</th>
<th>ruselljack Opera Project application.doc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ruselljack performance clip.mp4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ruselljack Opera Project budget template.xls</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ruselljack Child Protection Policy.doc</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ruselljack youtube link.doc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total combined limit for all supporting material uploaded with a single application is **40MB**.
2.4 Make your application online

To make your application online, you go through four main stages. Click Save draft at the end of each stage. You can come back to your application and revise it at any time before you finally submit it.

1. Choose funding programme and download application form

To start a new application, click the Make an application button on your home page, and follow the prompts to choose the funding programme you wish to apply for and to give your application a unique reference by which to identify it. At this stage you can also download the application form (if you have not already done so).

2. Request funding amount

At this stage, specify the expenditure and income related to your proposal, and the amount of funding you are requesting. The amount you request should equal total expenditure minus total income. The final figures you enter here should be the same as those you enter in section 3 of the application form and in your detailed budget.

3. Upload application form and supporting material

Follow the prompts to upload your filled-in and saved application form, detailed budget, CVs and any other required supporting material (see section 1.7 What supporting material must you submit with your application?). You do not have to upload everything at the same time. You can save your application as a draft, and come back to it later.

4. Submit application

When you are satisfied that you have uploaded everything you need to support your application, click Submit.

Once submitted, your application cannot be amended. Do not submit your application until you are completely satisfied.

You should expect to receive two emails. The first will be issued immediately your application is received by the Arts Council. The second may arrive a few minutes later and will contain your application number, which will be used on all correspondence related to this application. Note: it is important that you contact onlineservices@artscouncil.ie if you do not receive the second confirmation email containing the application number.
3. Processing and assessment of applications

3.1 Overview
The Arts Council considers all applications, makes decisions and communicates these to applicants in accordance with set procedures. The aim is to ensure that the system for making awards is fair and transparent.

3.2 Assessment process
All applications received are processed by the Arts Council as follows:

1. The application is acknowledged.
2. The application is checked for eligibility – all eligible applications then progress to the assessment stage.
3. Adviser(s) and/or staff make a written assessment of the application.
4. Adviser(s) and/or staff recommend an application as shortlisted or not shortlisted.
5. A peer panel reviews all shortlisted applications and associated materials, then scores and makes decisions.
6. Decisions are communicated in writing to applicants.
7. Decisions are noted by Council.

Time frame
The Arts Council endeavours to assess applications as quickly as possible, but the volume of applications and the rigorous assessment process means that it will take up to twelve weeks from closing date to decision.

3.3 Criteria for the assessment of applications
Applications are assessed in a competitive context and with consideration of the application form and the supporting materials submitted. All applications are assessed against criteria of 

a) artistic merit,  
b) how they meet the objectives and priorities of the award, and  
c) feasibility. Each of these criteria is described in turn.

While applicants may choose other artforms/arts practices relevant to their application, the assessment will be undertaken by the team specific to the chosen primary artform, and which may, in certain instances, ask for a secondary assessment from another team.

Artistic merit
The assessment of artistic merit focuses on the applicant and those involved in the project as well as on the nature of the proposed arts activity, and might include, among other things, consideration of:

- The quality of the idea and the proposed arts activity
- The track record of the applicant and the artistic personnel involved in the project as evidenced in their CVs and other supporting materials submitted
- The potential of the applicant and the artistic personnel as evidenced in the application form and the supporting materials submitted
- The ambition, originality and competency demonstrated in the proposal
- How the application demonstrates innovation, experimentation and collaboration.
Meeting the objectives and priorities of the award

Applications are assessed on how well they meet the objectives and priorities of the award; see section 1.1 Objectives and priorities of the award for details of these.

Feasibility

The assessment of feasibility considers the extent to which the applicant demonstrates capacity to deliver the proposed activity. This includes consideration of:

- The track record of personnel involved in managing, administering and delivering the project
- The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the provision of equitable conditions and remuneration for participating artists
- The extent of involvement and/or verified commitment of identified project partners
- The proposed budget
- Other sources of income
- The availability of, and access to, other resources
- The proposed timetable or schedule and/or production plans.

3.4 Peer panel

The purpose of peer-panel meetings is to allow for a diversity of expert views to inform the decision-making process. Peer panels normally consist of at least three external adjudicators with relevant artform and/or arts practice expertise.

Each meeting is usually led by an Arts Council member acting as non-voting chair. Arts Council advisers and staff attend as required, and those involved in the initial assessment of applications are on hand to provide information as required. Panellists have access to all shortlisted applications and associated materials prior to the day of the meeting, at which point they review, discuss and score shortlisted applications. Following this, applications are ranked by score. In light of the competitive context and the available budget, it is likely that the Arts Council will be able to fund only a proportion of the applications received.

Scoring process

The panel is asked to score applications according to the following system:

- A – Must Fund (10 points): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have fully met the criteria for the award and merits funding on that basis, to the amount requested where possible.
- B – Should Fund (8 points): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have met the criteria to an extent sufficient to merit funding should resources allow.
- C – Could Fund (5 points): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have met the criteria, but to a lesser extent within the competitive context than other applications.
- D – Not a Priority (2 points): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have not met the criteria to an extent sufficient to merit funding.
Declaration of interest

In order to ensure fairness and equity in decision-making, a panel member must declare an interest where they have a close personal or professional link with the applicant or are linked in any way with the application. An ‘interest’ is either ‘pecuniary’ or ‘non-pecuniary’ (e.g. familial relationships, personal partnerships, or formal or informal business partnerships, etc.).

The interest must be declared as soon as the panellist becomes aware of it. This may be at the point when s/he is approached to sit on the panel (if the ‘interest’ is known at that stage) or following receipt of the list of applicants. Where an interest is declared, the panellist will not receive papers relating to that applicant and will be required to leave the room when the specific application is being reviewed. Where this situation arises, the chair will vote in lieu of the panellist.

In some instances a panellist may not realise that a conflict of interest exists until s/he receives and reviews the panel papers. In such instances the panellist must alert an Arts Council staff member or the panel chair as soon as they become aware that a conflict may exist.

In the event of two panellists declaring a conflict of interest for the same application, the chair will be part of the decision-making process for that specific application.

If the nominated panel chair has a conflict of interest s/he must declare it in writing in advance of the meeting as soon as s/he becomes aware of it. In this instance the head of team will chair the discussion on the conflicted application.

3.5 Outcome of applications

All applicants are informed in writing about the outcome of their application.

If your application is successful, you will be sent a letter of offer detailing the amount of funding you have been awarded and the terms and conditions of the award. You will also be told how to go about drawing down your award.

The Arts Council receives a large volume of applications, and demand for funding always exceeds the available resources. If your application is not successful, you can request feedback from Arts Council staff. Eligibility and compliance with application procedures alone do not guarantee receipt of an award.

Unsuccessful applicants are not eligible to apply for another Arts Council award to undertake the same activity. If the Arts Council feels that the proposed activity would have been more suited to a different award programme, an exception may be made. In such circumstance you will be informed in writing.

Appeals

Applicants may appeal against a funding decision on the basis of an alleged infringement or unfair application of, or deviation from, the Arts Council’s published procedures. If you feel that the Arts Council’s procedures have not been followed, please see the appeals process at http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/fundInfo/funding_appeals.aspx or contact the Arts Council for a copy of the appeals-process information sheet.