

# Funding Agreements for Arts Council Strategic Funding

## About this document

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Strategic Funding is a significant proportion of the Arts Council's overall investment in the arts, and it is a key way of delivering on the priorities and goals in our ten-year strategy, *Making Great Art Work*.

This document explains how we will manage your funding agreements and what is expected of your organisation when you are awarded strategic funding.

The purpose of Strategic Funding is to support organisations with ambitious and imaginative proposals to:

- assist artists in developing their practice and their ideas, and/or
- deliver excellent arts experiences to the public.

Strategic Funding is available for one year (2018) or three years (2018–2020).

## What reporting requirements will my organisation have to meet?

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If your organisation is awarded Strategic Funding, you will have to meet particular monitoring requirements around audiences, public engagement, artist and artform development, and operating model, according to Arts Council strategic priorities.

These requirements will be detailed in funding agreements. The specific details of funding agreements will depend on:

- your organisation type,
- the kinds of activities you undertake, and
- the balance between your interaction with artists and the public.

Each funding agreement is individual to an organisation: a producing or publishing organisation will have a different funding agreement to a resource or service organisation or a festival.

Successful applications will be awarded funding according to funding **bands**.

<b>Band A</b>	Up to €99,999 each year
<b>Band B</b>	€100,000 – €249,999 each year
<b>Band C</b>	€250,000 – €499,999 each year
<b>Band D</b>	Over €500,000 each year

Your organisation will be in contact with your arts manager throughout the year to ensure you meet your reporting requirements. You will also be able to contact your arts manager at any time by phone and email if you need to.

This table shows the requirements for each funding band.

<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual review process</li> <li>● A completed financial activity report form detailing Arts Council supported activity</li> <li>● An annual report on activities and audited accounts</li> <li>● A mid-year self-evaluation report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual review process</li> <li>● A completed financial activity report form detailing Arts Council supported activity</li> <li>● An annual report on activities and audited accounts</li> <li>● A mid-year self-evaluation report</li> <li>● A mid-year performance review meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual review process</li> <li>● A completed financial activity report form detailing Arts Council supported activity</li> <li>● An annual report on activities and audited accounts</li> <li>● A mid-year self-evaluation report</li> <li>● A mid-year performance review meeting</li> <li>● Quarterly activity reports</li> <li>● Copies of all board papers, including management accounts</li> <li>● A detailed strategic plan which is approved by your board and states how you will achieve your objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual review process</li> <li>● A completed financial activity report form detailing Arts Council supported activity</li> <li>● An annual report on activities and audited accounts</li> <li>● A mid-year self-evaluation report</li> <li>● A mid-year performance review meeting</li> <li>● Quarterly activity reports</li> <li>● Copies of all board papers, including management accounts</li> <li>● A detailed strategic plan which is approved by your board and states how you will achieve your objectives</li> <li>● An annual on-site meeting</li> <li>● Advance notice to the Arts Council of changes to key personnel either at board or management level</li> </ul>

## What is the annual review process?

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If you have applied to the Arts Council before, you assessed your previous year's activities as part of your application process.

The new annual review process is similar to that process, but it will not happen at the same time as your application process.

Instead, every spring, there will be a review of all organisations which receive Strategic Funding. Your organisation will be evaluated on:

- the quality of the artistic outputs and/or the quality of your work with artists based on assessments by Arts Council staff, advisors or both;
- the quality of your work around developing the arts;
- the quality of your engagement with audiences and other publics;
- your business performance; and
- your strategic impact.

This means there is less of a direct connection between the review process and funding allocations.

We have separated the review process from the application process to:

- allow more time and space to delve deeper into reviewing how organisations are performing;
- give organisations an opportunity to respond as part of the review meeting process; and
- streamline and simplify the application process.

### How will the annual review process work?

Each January, funded organisations will receive two online documents:

- a questionnaire so you can assess and report on your own performance for the previous year; and
- a financial activity form so you can review and report on:
  - audience numbers,
  - employment numbers,
  - income, and
  - other relevant information such as partnerships, fundraising activity and critical responses to your work.

Arts Council staff will review your responses and add their own assessment and analysis of your work. This assessment and analysis will be scored.

After we review your responses and our assessment, we will send you a written report. If we have any issues or concerns to discuss, we will then meet you.

You will get a clear understanding of how Council views your organisation in a way that is not directly linked to your funding allocation.

### **What will the annual review process mean for organisations?**

A key goal of the Arts Council is that public monies are invested effectively to realise our priorities. For many organisations the annual review process allows them to reflect on how they are delivering on their plans and ambitions agreed as part of their funding agreement with the Arts Council.

It is possible that, as a result of the annual review, we may tell you that we are concerned with how your organisation is performing in relation to the targets set out in your funding agreement. This may be based on concerns about the quality of your work or about operational, governance or financial issues. In such instances the Arts Council will agree a plan of action and set targets with the organisation. If, over time, the performance of the organisation does not improve to our satisfaction, we may have to significantly reduce or withdraw financial support from your organisation.

This does not mean that we no longer wish to support any aspect of an organisation's work. For example, we may advise you to apply to a different Arts Council funding programme, such as Project and Programme funding.

In these circumstances, we will deal with your organisation as fairly, openly and transparently as possible.

A key purpose of moving the annual review process to the spring is to give organisations enough notice so they can adjust their business models if they are advised to apply under a different funding category. In certain circumstances, the Arts Council may support organisations with costs associated with adjusting their business model.

### **Will there be other detailed reviews?**

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In some cases, where it is appropriate, organisations may be selected for a more detailed review of their performance. This may happen:

- if an organisation is having financial difficulties;

- if the Arts Council wants to get a more detailed understanding of how your organisation operates;
- to assist with the development of policy and strategic planning; or
- to create case studies to help us better understand the impacts and outcomes of our investment.

## Are there different terms and conditions for strategic funding?

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In addition to funding agreements, organisations will be subjected to the normal terms and conditions of financial assistance. These terms and conditions are being revised and updated to take account of this new approach to funding.