

**Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations (CTEER)
Committee**

Regular Funding 2018-21: Call for Views

**Response from Creative Scotland to the Committee's letter, dated
14 June 2018**

31 August 2018

1. Introduction

This paper presents our response to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations (CTEER) Committee's letter of 14 June 2018, following their inquiry into the Regular Funding, 2018-21, process.

Creative Scotland welcomed the call for views by the Committee and, in particular, the constructive feedback and opinion that it gathered from a sample of the people and organisations that we are here to support.

We would like to thank the 52 organisations and individuals who took the time to submit responses to the call for views.

We received 184 applications for Regular Funding in this most recent round and, of the 52 submissions published by the Committee, 35 were from organisations which applied, representing 19% of all Regular Funding applicants. The remaining submissions to the CTEER call were either from organisations which did not apply for Regular Funding or from individuals taking the opportunity to express their views on a range of matters through the inquiry process.

Following the application, assessment and decision-making process, the Regular Funding network 2018-21 consists of 121 organisations which are receiving funding of £101,623,507 over the three-year period April 2018 – March 2021. We are able to provide three-years' security for a network of organisations which is rich in creative excellence, extensive in its geographic reach and includes new organisations which increase opportunity for people who wouldn't ordinarily have the chance to access the arts to do so.

See here for the [full list of organisations in the network](#).

We are very grateful to the Scottish Government for confirming budgets for Regular Funding for the three years in our recent [Draft Budget letter](#) from the Cabinet Secretary.

Creative Scotland also took the opportunity to submit a response to the Committee's inquiry and our submission clearly sets out the role of Regular Funding, the chronology of the decision-making process and what we saw as key learnings at that time. This submission can be read here:

http://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/51575/CTEER-submission-Regular-Funding.pdf

The Committee's deadline for receipt of submissions was 30 March 2018.

On 14 June 2018, the Committee Convener, Joan McAlpine MSP, wrote to Creative Scotland setting out a number of issues for consideration and requesting a response from Creative Scotland by 31 August 2018. The Convener's letter can be read here:

http://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/General%20Documents/CTEER_2018.06.14_Letter_to_Creative_Scotland.pdf

Some of the issues raised in the Convener's letter of 14 June are addressed, either in full or in part, in Creative Scotland's detailed written submission to the

inquiry and, as such, we repeat some elements of that submission in this response, expanding upon them where necessary.

2. Creative Scotland's response

By way of an initial response to Convener's letter of 14 June, Creative Scotland's Chair, Robert Wilson, wrote to the Committee and his letter can be read here: http://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/52612/201806-Letter-to-Convener-CTEER-Committee1.pdf

In this initial response, Mr Wilson highlighted a number of workstreams being progressed in relation to Regular Funding, to funding more broadly and to how Creative Scotland works in the future.

The following sections (2.1), (2.2), (2.3) and (2.4) provide an update on these workstreams.

2.1. Independent Review of Regular Funding 2018-21

In Mr Wilson's letter to the Convener, he said:

"We have read and digested all the submissions that the Committee received, and your letter. We respect the investment of time and thought that individuals and organisations have put into their submissions and I'd like to assure the Committee that, as recently appointed Chair of Creative Scotland, I recognise there needs to be full trust and confidence in the organisation.

We are conducting a formal, independent, review of the last round of Regular Funding. This review is underway, and we will be in a position to share the findings and recommendations after the Summer recess. There is, of course, already a lot of very constructive and useful material in the submissions received by the Committee which will contribute to this process."

In June 2018, following a tender and procurement process, we appointed independent consultants [Wavehill](#) to conduct a full and comprehensive review of the Regular Funding 2018-21 process. The aim of this independent evaluation was to provide us with objective insight on the end-to-end process which was run, with a set of recommendations to help inform the development of future funding models.

The evaluation considered:

- Published guidance and application process
- Effectiveness of the approach to and delivery of each of the five stages of the published process
- Funding Agreement negotiations and conclusion
- Governance across the Regular Funding process
- Complaints process
- Internal and external communication
- External factors: press, social media
- Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee (CTEER) call for views on Regular Funding

This review has recently been completed, and 105 organisations that applied for Regular Funding (57% of the total 184 organisations which applied) responded to the survey. A draft report has been provided and findings will be published in due course, however, the following statement from the Reviewers summarises their findings:

"In terms of the delivery of the 2018-21 RFO process against the stated aims and guidance, the evidence broadly points to compliance across all stages up to the announcement of the funding decisions taken by the Board in January 2018.

There is undoubtedly a need to improve various aspects of the implementation of the process, including providing stronger support and guidance for staff, greater clarity for applicants and clearer information for Board members, however, the assessment process has been rigorous and the progressive nature of the funding model has enabled the process to benefit from the skills, experience and knowledge of a wide range of staff."

Wavehill social and economic research, August 2018

2.2. Wider review of our overall funding approach

In our submission to the Committee, we said:

"We are committed to a root and branch review of how we fund. We will – importantly – do this in full collaboration with the people and organisations we support."

The Evaluation of Regular Funding 2018-21, its findings and recommendations will feed into this wider review of our overall funding approach and we aim to have this completed by the end of this financial year, 2018/19.

2.3. Organisational Review

In his initial response to the Convener's letter, the Chair of Creative Scotland said:

"I will be working with the Board and Staff to conduct an organisational review which will look at Creative Scotland's culture and working practices, values, structure and operations in order to shape a better future for Creative Scotland and the sectors we support."

This work includes reviewing our strategic direction, funding model, functions and operations, as well as culture, values, and behaviours, and its scope will include the Board as well as Staff team.

To ensure the process leads to appropriate and effective action within agreed timescales, the Board has set up a sub-Committee consisting of Robert Wilson as Chair, with Board members Cate Nelson-Shaw, Iain Aitchison and Karthik Subramanya. This sub-committee will work with a small dedicated project team of Staff who will be empowered to co-ordinate and drive the planning and delivery of the overall programme, working with specialist external resources.

The sub-Committee is meeting regularly and we are progressing this work as a matter of priority, however, it is important to bear in mind that real and positive change is a continuous process. A tender to appoint an independent organisation/specialist consultant to work with us and contribute to this review is currently live. Changes will be implemented, and recommendations actioned on an ongoing basis over the coming weeks and months in order to ensure we effectively address the issues raised, embedding clarity and improvements for the longer term.

2.4. Review of Open Project Funding

We know that there are changes that we can make to the [Open Project Funding](#) (OPF) programme that will make the application process easier for applicants. Our planned review of funding, mentioned in section (2), will be looking at this in detail and we will be taking this work forward as part of that.

In the meantime, we are looking at the internal processes associated with the programme and will be making some adjustments to the assessment, decision making and feedback mechanisms. These internal changes will ensure that our staff are being supported to deliver this programme most effectively.

Work to date has concentrated on the under £15k strand of OPF where we receive the greatest number of applications. We will implement the changes from October 2018 and will monitor their effectiveness with a view to implementing further improvements across the programme into the future. While the changes will not affect applicants directly they will notice changes to the assessment format when they receive the assessor's report on their application.

3. Responses to specific points raised in the Convener's letter of 14 June

The letter from the Convener sets out a number of points that were raised in the evidence received from the 52 individuals and organisations who submitted responses to the Committee's call for views in March.

3.1 Factual Inaccuracies

The Convener said: "When the Committee raised concerns with Creative Scotland about whether it experienced an internal communication breakdown on this matter, you committed to reviewing this issue and to report back once the review is completed. The Committee considers it is a serious matter that Creative Scotland's evidence appears to be inconsistent with written evidence received by the Committee. The Committee therefore considers that Creative Scotland's review should be completed as a matter of urgency and we invite Creative Scotland to advise the Committee of the outcome of this review in its response to this letter."

Creative Scotland would like to assure the Committee that we took all suggestions of factual inaccuracies extremely seriously, and each and every instance highlighted to us has been thoroughly examined.

We can confidently assert that the number of factual inaccuracies in the assessment process have been found to be extremely limited, and more importantly, of those identified, none had any material bearing on the final recommendation or decision.

The facts are as follows:

- The majority of communications we received from applicants regarding Regular Funding decisions constituted the expression of views or opinion and did not represent formal complaints.
- A total of eight representations from organisations (out of the 184 applications received) were requested by the applicant to be formally investigated, within the scope of our published [Complaints](#) process and these were undertaken by a Creative Scotland Director.
- Of these formal complaints, three were found to contain points of factual inaccuracy in the text of the assessment.
- Rather than factual inaccuracies, most of the complaints we received centred on:
 - Challenge to the comments made within the assessment;
 - The use of information in the assessment (*drawn from the original application*) which was later deemed by the applicant to be inaccurate;
 - The assertion by the applicant that prior knowledge of the organisation (*not made explicit in the supplied application documentation*) should have been given more precedence.
- In two of the eight formal complaints investigated there was found to be elements of the assessment that did not meet our standards. In both instances, the applications were still recommended for funding at the end of the Stage Two process.

As our published guidance and previous submission to the Committee states, Stage Two assessment was one of five stages in the process. The purpose of this objective assessment stage was primarily to identify whether an application sufficiently met the criteria to be recommended for funding and to highlight any areas of concern or inconsistency.

The guidance for Stage Two assessment stated that assessors should ensure that all comments were evidence-based and based *on the submitted documentation only*. This was to ensure a level playing field for all applicants. At the end of this stage it was the responsibility of the Specialism Leads to further ensure that assessments were consistent and of the quality expected.

We recognise that while Stage Two assessments may not always be well received by some applicant organisations, with the exceptions highlighted above, Creative Scotland's view is that they were conducted within the framework of the published guidelines.

The independent review of the Regular Funding process corroborates this view stating:

"The CTEER inquiry letter, based on the representations made by a small number of applicant organisations, appears to infer that these factual inaccuracies were material to the decision-making process on which organisations were recommended for funding. They were not and there is no evidence to suggest that any organisation was not progressed to Stage 3 of the stated process due to any factual inaccuracy. In other words, it did not lead to organisations being assessed as unfundable.

In practice, many of the factual inaccuracies referred to in assessment reports were, in the wider RFO process, either minor grammatical errors or a difference of opinion between the assessing officer and the applicant."

Wavehill social and economic research, August 2018

3.2 Touring Fund

The Convener said: *The Committee considers Creative Scotland's handling of the Regular Funding decision-making process in relation to touring theatre and dance companies fell well below the standard that is expected from a non-departmental public body. Creative Scotland should have made a decision about touring companies' eligibility for regular funding before applications were opened and communicated its decision clearly to the sector. The failure to do so has meant that artists and organisations have committed staff and financial resources unnecessarily to complete regular funding applications. This approach has hampered the sector's trust in Creative Scotland and added to ongoing uncertainty for the sector at a time when the funding pressures on the sector are already high.*

We would like to take this opportunity to recap the history of the Touring Fund's gestation and progress to date:

- In late 2016, Creative Scotland commissioned an independent review of Touring for Theatre and Dance.
- The Report was published in May 2017 and can be read here: <http://www.creativescotland.com/resources/professional-resources/research/creative-scotland-research/a-review-of-touring-theatre-and-dance-in-scotland>
- Two important conclusions in the report were:
 - (a) The need for a strategic focus for Touring;
 - (b) The need to establish a touring fund driven by a renewed vision and clear strategic priorities around artistic quality, audience development, reach, balance of genre and scale, depth of engagement, efficiency, sustainability, continuity and progression.

The recommendations were then taken forward by two working groups, led by the Federation of Scottish Theatre, and including representatives of both Project Funded and Regularly Funded organisations, as well as Creative Scotland specialist Staff.

The groups were recruited through an open call at the end of May 2017 and convened over the course of the Summer/Autumn 2017. Their remit was to

develop solutions across a range of issues highlighted in the Review, including the development of a bespoke scheme to fund Touring.

Until Creative Scotland received its budget settlement from the Scottish Government in December 2017 it was not possible to confirm the affordability or timing of this solution.

Regular Funding decisions are not taken in isolation, but with regard to other funding available through Open Project and Targeted routes. In the event, the enhanced budget settlement from the Scottish Government enabled us to commit to opening a Touring Fund and provide support to touring companies through both multi and single year agreements pending the Fund's first application round.

Nevertheless, we also recognise that, ahead of the announcement of Regular Funding decisions on 25 January, the specific impact of the Touring Fund approach should have been discussed in more detail with the organisations affected in this funding round. How to maintain open and transparent dialogue with organisations without compromising the integrity of the decision-making process will be a necessary consideration in how future funding rounds are conducted.

It was always the intention that the detail of the Touring Fund would be co-created with the Sector. In this light, two additional working group sessions led by an independent facilitator met in May 2018. The membership was based on the original working groups augmented by additional members to fill underrepresented sections of the sector e.g. physical performance and site-specific work, and involved many Regular Funding applicant organisations. These followed a product design methodology and focused on reaching consensus around what the Touring Fund should look like, and their recommendations informed the creation of draft guidelines for its implementation.

As a result of this work, the parameters and purpose of the Touring Fund have been agreed, the guidelines were published and the Fund opened for applications on 9 August 2018 - <http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/latest-news/archive/2018/08/2m-touring-fund-for-theatre-and-dance> - with a deadline for applications of 6 November 2018 and decisions to be announced on 19 December 2018.

The Board of Creative Scotland has agreed to make £2m available to support this Touring Fund in 2019/20 and many of the organisations who were unsuccessful in their application to Regular Funding, 2018-21, will be able to apply for support through this fund, as well as Open Project Funding and other Targeted Funding routes.

3.3 Strategic priorities, communication and funding criteria

The Convener said: *The Committee is disappointed that the strategic issues identified by Creative Scotland were not recognised at an earlier stage so that they could be addressed before applications for regular funding were opened. The failure to do so left a significant element of the cultural sector in a very challenging position and has ultimately had an impact on the sector's confidence in Creative Scotland's regular funding process. The Committee recognises that a significant proportion of the submissions received by the Committee were from applicants who did not receive funding from Creative Scotland. Nevertheless, these issues must be urgently addressed by Creative Scotland so that a revised strategy is in place before applications for the next round of regular funding are opened. The Committee intends to scrutinise Creative Scotland's plans for a refreshed strategy*

The criteria were clearly set out in our published guidelines and regularly communicated to applicants via updates throughout the application, assessment and decision-making period.

The independent Evaluation of the Regular funding 2018-21 process supports this assertion, for example:

"The majority, 62%, of applicant organisations either agreed or strongly agreed that the guidance for application was clear and helped them to complete it."

Wavehill social and economic research, August 2018

We do, however, appreciate that this could have been more clearly explained at the evidence session on 22 February.

As a reminder, the Regular Funding 2018-21 programme opened for applications on 16 January 2017, with a deadline of 3 April 2017. Full guidance was published on our website and was freely available throughout the process: <http://www.creativescotland.com/funding/latest-information/funded-organisations/regular-funding-2018-21/the-process>

The timings for both application and assessment were set in response to feedback from both the sector and our staff after the previous application round in 2014.

In the interests of transparency, a series of regular public communications and updates were provided throughout the process via our website and directly to applicants, for example: <http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/latest-news/archive/2017/10/update-on-regular-funding-october-2017>

We also held a series of Information Sessions across Scotland, specifically for representatives of organisations which were thinking of applying for Regular Funding 2018-21. These sessions were held in Aberdeen, Inverness, Galashiels, Edinburgh, Dumfries, Stirling and Glasgow in early 2017 and offered practical guidance for applicants and the opportunity to ask questions directly of Creative Scotland Staff. We received positive feedback on the clarity and usefulness of those sessions from those who attended.

Once applications were received, there was a careful and thorough five-stage decision making process:

- **Stage 1:** Checks for eligibility and completeness
- **Stage 2:** Objective assessments (Specialism Officers)
- **Stage 3:** Specialism scenario planning (Specialism Teams)
- **Stage 4:** All eligible applications were discussed in the round by the senior team at Creative Scotland, including specialism and art form leads, with the aim of establishing the best possible range and mix of organisations able to contribute to the delivery of our published 10-year plan, Ambitions and Connecting Themes. To achieve this we used our knowledge, expertise and professional judgement based on an overview of Scotland, the sectors and applications before us. We also took into consideration diversity, the range of art forms, size and type of organisation, geographical spread and financial health.
- **Stage 5:** Board decisions

The original timeline for this process was clearly communicated in the application guidance, which all applicants confirmed that they had read and understood as part of the process. This timeline was communicated as follows:

Regular Funding process and timeline at a glance

November 2016:

Guidelines and Application Form published

December 2016 – February 2017:

Information Sessions

16 January 2017:

Regular Funding opens for applications

3 April 2017:

Deadline for applications

April 2017:

Stage 1: Checking for eligibility and completeness

May – July (extended to August) 2017:

Stage 2: Specialist Officer assessments; Stage 3: Specialist Team discussions

September 2017:

Stage 4: Scenario Planning/Balancing the Network

Autumn/Winter 2017:

Stage 5: Approval by Creative Scotland's Board

Stage 6: Announcement of decisions

Announcement of the awards will follow the announcement of the 2018/19 budget by the Scottish Government.

We also undertook an Equality Impact Assessment of the Regular Funding application, assessment and decision-making process.

In terms of reflecting Creative Scotland's strategic priorities, through the application process, all organisations were required to clearly demonstrate their vision and purpose and how their work helps to deliver our first two ambitions: 'excellence and experimentation' and 'access and enjoyment'.

In addition, organisations were asked to demonstrate how their work contributed to Creative Scotland's connecting themes; to the broader development of the sector; commitment to fair pay; that they have effective governance and leadership in place; that they are financially resilient and robust; and that they have a commitment to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

The application was centred on the Business Plans of organisations, supported by an application form and any supplementary material.

While we consider that through this process, the strategic context and requirements for applicants were clearly set out, we take the feedback seriously and recognise the need for a refreshed approach to the way that we fund and the way that we work in the future.

This is why we have embarked on the work set out in section (2) of this paper.

3.4 Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

The Convener said: *The Committee is concerned to learn from stakeholders that when they have raised concerns about accessibility directly with Creative Scotland these do not appear to have been followed up. The Committee invites Creative Scotland to respond to the relevant issues highlighted in the written evidence and to advise what action it is taking to respond to individual concerns that have been raised directly with Creative Scotland on this issue.*

Creative Scotland is wholly committed to enhancing equalities, diversity and inclusion through our funding and through all aspects of our work and operations.

Regarding Regular Funding specifically, our aim is to ensure that the organisations and activity we fund offers a powerful mix of different types of

high quality work that reflects and encourages a better understanding of the significant diversity of Scotland's population.

On the subject of accessibility of the process, the independent review of the Regular Funding process states:

"The application form makes it clear that all guidance resources were available in alternative formats, including translations. Access support was also available to disabled applicants and could be tailored to individual requests. In this regard, the 2018-21 RFO process is consistent with the offer of support provided by Arts Council England and Arts Council Wales."

Wavehill social and economic research, August 2018

Creative Scotland did not receive any request for access assistance during the RFO process.

In terms of equalities, diversity and inclusion (EDI), the extent to which this is woven through the network of Regularly Funded Organisations is set out in detail here: <http://www.creativescotland.com/funding/latest-information/funded-organisations/regular-funding-2018-21/overviews/equalities-diversity-and-inclusion>

In addition, all Regularly Funded Organisations are committed to increasing access to artistic and creative work amongst communities across Scotland. We have seen a 36% increase of organisations in the network with strong forward plans regarding EDI.

We are also committed, across all of our routes to funding, guidance and application processes, to make them as accessible as possible and to continuously improve in this area.

Our funding guidance for major funding programmes, including that developed for Regular Funding 2018-21, is developed and tested with sector representatives *prior* to publication and it is regularly reviewed.

We take on board all individual and specific comments and feedback that we receive regarding accessibility – including those made during this inquiry process - and build these into future iterations of our published guidance and application forms. We receive constructive views and feedback on a daily basis through our Enquiries service and through our day-to-day dialogue with people and organisations across Scotland's cultural sector.

We are currently in discussion with the Plain English Campaign and will be working towards accreditation of our key funding documents.

One other recent development we have made is the introduction of BSL guidance for applicants, following an Inclusion Scotland internship at Creative Scotland.

More can be read on this here:

<http://www.creativescotland.com/explore/read/stories/features/2018/improving-access-to-our-funding-information>

As part of broader work plans and budgets for 2018/19 and beyond, Creative Scotland will be exploring options for further strategic investment to support artists and creative organisations in relation to engagement and participation; professional and creative development; and leadership with a specific focus on EDI.

Creative Scotland defines EDI as about fairness, cultural entitlement and about creating the conditions for excellent art to be produced: Equality is about removing barriers; Diversity is about supporting and reflecting different cultures in Scotland, enabling different voices to be heard; Inclusion is about creating opportunities for people to work in, engage with, participate in, and experience arts and creativity throughout the country.

Our EDI workplan for 2018/19 has been developed in the context of current equality legislation, the [Equality Act 2010](#) and subsequent guidance www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/guidance-scottish-public-authorities.

The EDI workplan for 2018/19 presents a strategic approach to support our ambition to not just remain compliant with our legislative duties but to exemplify best practice in their interpretation and delivery. Outlined activities build on work to date and lay a foundation for future years. This approach aims to encourage structural change and long-term impact.

It is essential that there are meaningful, accessible pathways for artists and creative practitioners excluded or marginalised within the public funding system (not solely Creative Scotland funding) to develop their professional skills and to create and develop new work. Some of our planned activities fall within the scope of positive action, which is permitted by the Equality Act 2010.

Creative Scotland is committed to a sustained strategic approach, at scale, to achieve systemic transformational change, underpinned by significant financial investment to support artists and creative practitioners across all sectors and protected characteristics providing opportunities for support at every level of a person's career.

3.5 Network organisations

The Convener said: *The Committee invites Creative Scotland to give consideration to an alternative model for the funding of network organisations going forward.*

The Regular Funding network consists of organisations that produce, present and distribute work as well as development organisations which will support the arts and creative sectors in Scotland to strengthen their future health and resilience.

Arts and Business Scotland, Creative Carbon Scotland, The Federation of Scottish Theatres, Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN), Creative Edinburgh, Creative Dundee, and the Scottish Music Industry Association, join Publishing Scotland, Voluntary Arts Scotland and Craft Scotland, amongst others, to deliver this work.

The work that these organisations do makes a significant a contribution to Scotland's creative and cultural landscape.

While each of them is distinct and different, they all contribute through providing support and development activities to creative communities. It is vital that organisations working across a broad range of practice form part of the Regularly Funded network, a network which is representative of Scotland's creative and cultural landscape. It is also vital that it is a network that enables effective development to be made in terms of the cultural, social and economic benefits that are felt across society.

Even if it were deemed appropriate or possible to separate out these organisations, alternative sources of funding to support these vital organisations are simply not available to Creative Scotland. It was, therefore both a strategic and a financial decision to include these organisations in the network.

Alternative funding models will, of course, be explored as part of the overall funding review mentioned in section (2) of this paper, however, all of this will happen within the budget constraints in which Creative Scotland operates.

3.6 Geographical spread

The Convener said: *The Committee seeks an update from Creative Scotland on what action it is taking to address its engagement with all local authorities, particularly the eight areas from which no applications were made in the current round, in its response to this letter.*

Creative Scotland is committed to ensuring that our funding supports cultural provision and practice across all parts of Scotland and to working with Local Authorities and other partners to achieve this.

Through all our routes to funding, Creative Scotland supports the arts, screen and creative industries in all parts of Scotland and in all 32 Local Authorities.

With their home bases in 21 Local Authorities, three-quarters of the 121 Regularly Funded Organisations for 2018-21 work Scotland-wide, including through touring.

In addition to Regular Funding, our Open Project Funding supports artists and creative projects in every part of Scotland and our Targeted Funding supports nationwide projects such as the Youth Music Initiative and Cashback for Creativity. To assist potential applicants, we regularly participate in funding events across Scotland, providing information on applying to Creative Scotland.

In addition, we currently have 12 live Place Partnerships with Local Authorities which are specifically aimed at developing cultural provision locally, including in some of Scotland's most challenged areas. Looking forward, we are proposing that this programme will be targeted at regions with comparatively fewer applications for Regular and Open Project Funding and where issues such as geography and economic limitations were identified as challenges within our Understanding Diversity in the Arts Survey.

More information on our support for creative activity across Scotland is provided in our latest [Annual Review](#) (page 40 onwards).

3.7 Application resources and timing

The Convener said: *We invite Creative Scotland to give consideration to this issue and the suggestions highlighted above in the written evidence.*

We agree that the amount of time and resources required to apply for Regular Funding in the form set out in the 2018-21 process is too onerous for some applicants in its current form.

However, we must all recognise that where there are significant sums of public funds involved, more applications than there are funds to support, and challenging decisions to be made regarding the allocations of those limited funds, then detail in terms of an organisation's creative plans, business plans, operations and finances are all critical.

This view is corroborated by the independent review of the Regular Funding process, which states:

"The majority of applicant organisations either agreed or strongly agreed that the information they were required to give was reasonable for the amount they applied for.

Despite this, a quarter of respondents felt that the levels of information they were asked to produce took a considerable amount of resources and effort."

Wavehill social and economic research, August 2018

As regards the length of time the process took, we agree that this was longer than anticipated and recognise that this created challenges for organisations. The timings for both application and assessment were set in response to feedback from both the sector and our staff after the previous application round in 2014.

Our original intention was to announce decisions in Autumn/Winter 2017, however, the timing of both the UK and Scottish Government budgets meant that final decisions needed to be delayed until after Creative Scotland's budget settlement was known (in mid-December 2017). The recommended Network was presented to the Creative Scotland Board for final approval on 18 January 2018.

Nevertheless, as we have already said in our submission to the Committee, we recognise that the Regular Funding process should be improved and we will be looking at alternative models as part of the funding review mentioned in section (2) of this paper, a review which will draw on the evidence submitted to this inquiry as well as direct consultation with the people and organisations we are here to support.

4. In Summary

We have taken the points raised in the Convenor's letter very seriously and hope the above provides a comprehensive and satisfactory response but will be happy to provide further information or answer any further questions as required.

We would like to assure the Convenor, the Committee and anyone else reading this response that we fully recognise that there needs to be full trust and confidence in our organisation.

That is why we are absolutely committed to moving forwards in a positive and constructive manner, working collaboratively with the people and organisations we are here to support, to the benefit of all aspects of culture and creativity in Scotland and to those that live, work or visit here.

Creative Scotland
31 AUGUST 2018

ENDS