



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

# Creative Scotland Funding Criteria: 1. Quality and Ambition

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# Introduction

In 2021/22 Creative Scotland refreshed its Strategic Framework, establishing a new set of aims and priorities to guide our work. This refresh took into account our remit and the role we are here to deliver. As part of this, we also updated our funding criteria, on which we will base all future funding activity.

These criteria are:

## 1. Quality and Ambition

2. Engagement

3. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

4. Environmental Sustainability

5. Fair Work

6. International (optional - only for applications involving international activity)

Each of the criteria listed above has its own guide, that sets out:

- The outcomes we want to see in this area of our work as a result of our funding
- Where this work aligns to national policy agendas
- Key aspects of the sector's work in this area, including current challenges
- Any links to relevant further information.

To access each guide please [visit our website](#).

Please note that applicants to our Funds do not necessarily need to address all the Criteria set out here. Each Fund will have specific questions which will be proportionate to the levels of funding available. We recognise that organisations and individuals work in different ways and will be at different stages in their development. However, Creative Scotland does expect all those we fund to have a clear vision for delivery against the Fund Criteria and to report impact against them.

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# Quality and Ambition

## Key outcomes

***Our Priority: People and organisations working in art and creativity are supported to make work of quality and ambition that enriches life in Scotland for everyone***

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### **What do we want to achieve?**

We want to support individuals and organisations across Scotland to develop and deliver high quality work that reflects Scotland's diversity and distinct identity.

We recognise that organisations will have different routes towards the creation of high quality work – expressed as their vision, mission, or ambitions. Quality can be evident in the creative outcome, in the creative process, in the experience for audiences and participants, or a combination of these. For organisations whose role is sector development, quality can be evident in their service, support, advice, and engagement with their sectors or customers.

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### **How do we define Quality and Ambition?**

In the creative and cultural sector, quality is a subjective measurement. We see quality across all art forms, specialisms and genres and there is no single description that can capture when something is considered high quality. While we therefore don't use a particular definition, we do consider a number of different aspects when assessing the quality of a project, proposal or piece of work.

High quality work results from having a strong **creative vision** and an effective **creative process** – the knowledge, skills and expertise to deliver it. In some instances putting **place and communities** at the heart of this activity can provide audiences and participants with high quality cultural and creative experiences and adds value to localities and communities of practice. For organisations, quality is also driven by effective **governance and leadership**. We want to see the creative and cultural sectors support collaboration and creative exchange and establish and signpost clear pathways for **workforce and talent development**.

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### **Why is this a priority?**

We value culture and creativity in and of itself and for the meaning it offers to people's lives. And we value it for the many cultural, social and economic benefits that it produces. We believe that imagination, inspiration, skill and expertise are constants at the heart of the work of Scotland's creative community. People in Scotland recognise the value of creativity to their health and wellbeing and describe culture as an important part of their own lives, viewing Scotland as a creative nation.

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## National policy agendas

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### Our roles and responsibilities

Creative Scotland's founding purpose describes our functions as a public body, including *'identifying, supporting and developing quality and excellence and encouraging and supporting creative endeavours which contribute to an understanding of Scotland's national culture in its broad sense, as a way of life'*. The Scottish Government's Culture Strategy states that Culture in Scotland is valued in and of itself and is free to be inspiring and to challenge. It sets out a commitment to strengthening Scotland's diverse cultures; the transformative potential of culture in other areas of public policy such as health and education; and the ability of culture to empower communities and generate a distinct sense of place, identity and confidence.

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## Key work in this area

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### Creative Vision

We want to see applicants with a clear creative vision to support the creation of high-quality work and high-quality audience experiences. We will consider what applicants are aiming to achieve – expressed as vision, mission, ambitions or aims – and the likelihood of them achieving this. We are also interested in the ways in which applicants have developed their vision, including engagement with stakeholders, and how it is understood internally and communicated externally.

Culture and creativity animate and enliven life in many ways, through works of art, film, live performances, exhibitions, workshops, discussions, and digital experiences. They challenge, provoke, stimulate, give meaning, tell stories, entertain and connect through beauty, intelligence, compassion, deep meaning and humour. This offers us the chance to pause and reflect on who we are, our place in the world and what we could be.

We want to see organisations exploring innovative practice, building on successful achievements to date and learning and growing through the development of new skills, networks and business models. This will involve being adaptive to emerging models of practice or formats for the presentation of work, as well as protecting tried and tested models and building on them. We want to see the culture and creative sector embrace experimentation and recognise that some work may be deemed to be of higher risk where it is pushing forward existing artistic and creative practice.

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## **Creative Process**

Applicants should be able to demonstrate their experience in the development, delivery or support of creative activity. We want the sectors we support to produce great work that captures peoples' imagination, generates meaningful experiences and inspires debate. Where appropriate, we want to see new technologies used by people working in the sector to produce and share ground-breaking work.

We want to create space for debate, critical thinking, risk and experimentation, encouraging connections across the arts screen and creative industries, and making the most of digital technologies, where appropriate. Research, development, critical thinking and self-reflection are all recognised as important to the work of the sectors we support.

We are ambitious for all the specialisms covered by our remit and want to see high-quality work across all areas of the creative and cultural sectors. We support individuals and organisations working across all areas of creative practice including craft, dance, design, Gaelic art, literature, music, screen, traditional arts, theatre, visual arts, and cross-disciplinary practice. We also recognise that artistic and creative forms are constantly evolving, and increasingly developing links and overlaps driven by new knowledge and collaborative approaches to creativity.

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## **Place and communities**

We want to see those we fund responding to local contexts, promoting artistic development and business sustainability across all parts of Scotland. We want to see locally distinctive work valued and encouraged. The opportunities created by putting Scotland's communities at the heart of what we do and by working towards inclusivity and open access, are wide-reaching and significant. We want to see our layered and textured cities, towns and environments recognised as being born out of unique and individual circumstances. We want to see arts and creativity valued and understood as part of their character.

We want to encourage communities of practice around creative specialisms and groups of artists and creative practitioners. Programmes of larger organisations are often reliant on presenting and partnering with individual artists and creative people. This includes working closely with partners to increase opportunities for artists and creative people to flourish.

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## **Governance and leadership**

We expect applicants to observe good practice in all areas of finance, governance and management. For organisations, governance is the responsibility of a management board, company directors, or management committee or trustees, depending on how they are constituted. These individuals are accountable to all stakeholders and responsible for planning the forward direction of the organisation. A well-run organisation with a supportive and responsible board allows space for artistic vision and quality work to be realised as well as working with leaders to think creatively about plans for the future.

We want to see organisations with strong and transparent management arrangements that ensure they are set up to deliver against their ambitions, including supporting risk where appropriate. We want to see management that ensures business sustainability. We are also interested in understanding and supporting the development of future ways of working. New creative business models provide stability and new opportunities for individuals and organisations. World-class ideas stimulate new income streams and advance planning unlocks artistic, creative and economic opportunity.

Confident, well informed, diverse leadership ensures joined up thinking and maximises public resources. For many organisations, achieving this successfully will mean working closely in partnership with others including practitioners, public bodies, communities and representative groups, developing shared leadership across sectors that is knowledgeable, confident and ambitious.

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## **Workforce and Talent Development**

We want there to be clear pathways to enhance careers in the culture and creative sector. This encompasses nurturing emerging talent and providing professional development support to mid-career and established artists and creative practitioners. We want to see diverse talent from across the arts, screen and creative industries identified and nurtured. We want people to have increased skills through learning, sharing knowledge and easy access to information and networks.

We want people to be able to access many paths to pursue a career in the culture and creative sector, at any stage of their lives. Economically and socially, the demand for creativity skills and creative approaches is rising. The sector is responding to this demand and funded organisations have a role to play in supporting the development of these skills. Facilitating this work is a highly professional practice, requiring an authentic, highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

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## **Delivering wider impact**

We recognise that cultural and creative activity has the potential to deliver against a range of other public policy objectives. These include many of the stated ambitions of Scotland's National Performance Framework, including health and wellbeing, education, the economy and poverty reduction. These impacts may result from increased confidence or skills, or from widened horizons or networks. Equally, creative activity may take place in specific settings such as education, health, or care environments.

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## **Further information and supporting resources**

Below are links to policies, guidance and research which may be helpful. Please note that it is not necessary to read these in order to apply but may help you understand the wider context in which your work fits:

- **[Creative Scotland Annual Plan](#)**
- **[Scottish Government Culture Strategy for Scotland](#)**
- **[Scottish Government National Performance Framework](#)**
- **[Good Governance](#)**



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