Strategic Innovation Fund

Cultivate Grants

### Outcomes: Strategic Innovation Fund

* A diversity of individuals, groups, and organizations **have resources and opportunities** to develop new skills, knowledge, and innovation capacity.
* A diversity of individuals, groups, and organizations **adapt** to new and innovative ways of working.
* A diversity of individuals, groups, and organizations **leverage** strategic thinking and technology to develop new and innovative ways of working.
* **Building digital capacity** of arts groups and organizations that serve Indigenous, Northern, official language minority, and historically underserved and marginalized communities is supported.

### Overview

The five-year [Strategic Innovation Fund](https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/strategic-funds/strategic-innovation-fund) aims to strengthen and transform the arts sector. The Fund supports rebuilding and transformation projects and partnerships that contribute to a more resilient, sustainable, connected, accessible, and equitable arts sector.

The Fund includes three main components to help **seed**, **cultivate** and **grow** your idea:

* **Seed** provides seed funding to kickstart small-scale innovation activities that explore and develop capacity, partnerships, and promising innovation ideas
* **Cultivate** provides project grants to implement, pilot and protype innovation projects that address systemic issues and benefit the broader arts sector

**Grow** provides multi-year support for a limited number of longer-term, collaborative initiatives that propose sustainable solutions to sectoral or cross-sectoral issues and demonstrate strong potential to be scaled up for regional, national or international impact.

These components are designed to accompany Canadian individuals, groups, and organizations at different stages of innovation readiness, from capacity building to exploration to prototyping to full implementation. The Fund supports both small-scale activities with short timelines and longer-term complex initiatives.

**The following guidelines are for the Cultivate** **component**, which provides project grants to implement, pilot and protype innovation projects that address systemic issues and benefit the broader arts sector.

You may be eligible for [Application Assistance](https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/application-assistance) to pay someone to help you with the application process if you are experiencing difficulty and self-identify as:

* an applicant who is Deaf, hard of hearing, has a disability or is living with a mental illness

a First Nations, Inuit or Métis applicant facing language, geographic and/or cultural barriers.

**Grant type** **–** [project](http://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/project)

**Deadline(s) and notification of results –** consult the [Deadlines and Notifications of Results](https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/deadlines) page

### Grant amount – up to $250 000

### Application limits

* You can apply to this component twice per year (1 January to 31 December) for distinct projects with different activities.

### I want to apply – What else do I need to know?

If you have not already done so, you must register in the [portal](https://apply.canadacouncil.ca/) before you apply. Please note that profile validation can take up to 15 business days.

### Applicants – Who can apply?

Types of eligible applicants to this component include:

* artists and arts professionals
* cultural connectors
* artistic groups and collectives
* artistic organizations

First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists, arts/cultural professionals, cultural carriers, groups, collectives, and organizations

Organizations presently receiving core grants **are eligible** to apply to this initiative.

### Your eligibility to apply is determined by the validated profile created in the Canada Council portal.

Targeted funding will be in place to ensure equitable support for applicants who have self-identified using the checkboxes in the Council’s portal as belonging to one of the Council’s designated priority groups, which include applicants from culturally diverse, Deaf and disability, official language minority, and Indigenous communities.

In addition to the Council’s designated priority groups, we also encourage applications from youth (18 to 35) and other historically underserved and marginalized communities, including 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities, women, and artists at intersections of multiple identities.

### Activities – What can I apply for?

This component provides support for future-oriented innovation projects that address systemic issues in the arts sector and help rebuild a more resilient, sustainable, equitable, accessible, greener, healthier, and connected arts sector.

This component only supports collaborative projects that are undertaken in partnership with one or more organization, collective or group of artists. Partners must be actively involved in the governance and decision-making process of the project. To be eligible, projects must stretch beyond a personal gain or benefit to you, your group or organization and be able to demonstrate potential impact for the broader arts sector or a broader target community. Partnerships are not limited to the arts sector and we encourage cross sectoral collaborations with shared investment for shared benefit.

Proposed projects should explore a concrete solution to a clearly identified systemic issue experienced by the arts sector. This component supports all phases of project development and implementation. To be eligible, projects must include a piloting, prototyping, testing and/or implementation phase. This must be clearly outlined in your application submission.

Projects must respond to one or more (maximum of 3) of the following key strategic areas:

* Strengthening the resilience and sustainability of the arts sector, including new business and revenue models
* Advancing social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the arts
* Increasing the accessibility of arts and culture for people who are Deaf or have disabilities
* Decolonizing the arts sector
* Creating a greener arts sector
* Stimulating the digital transformation of the arts sector
* Improving the health, wellbeing, and financial security of artists and arts professionals
* Building networks and partnerships to strengthen the arts ecosystem and the role of arts in society

Amplifying the benefit of the arts for thriving communities.

**Ineligible activities**

regular and ongoing operating activities

Projects that primarily focus on artistic professional development, development and presentation of festivals, symposia, conferences, or other similar events, creating, producing, programming or presenting artistic work should seek support through the Council’s regular funding programs. Costs related to professional arts training, content creation, artistic creation and media production are subject to limits (outlined below) and must be justified and relevant to the delivery of your project.

**You cannot apply for** activities that occur before the deadline, those that receive funding from another Canada Council program or those on the [general list of ineligible activities](http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/guide/apply-to-programs/general-list-of-ineligible-activities).

When determining your project start date, individuals should be aware that according to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), expenses incurred in the year immediately before a grant is received are only deductible from the grant if they are incurred after the artist has received notification that the grant will be paid. For more information about income taxes and your grant, please refer to our [website](http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/guide/if-you-receive-a-grant/income-taxes).

### Expenses – What is eligible?

Up to 100% of eligible costs

Expenses **directly related** to the project activities, including, but not limited to:

* honoraria and fees paid to artists, experts, trainers, facilitators, project managers, consultants, elders, and community leaders directly involved in carrying out your project
* travel, accommodation and per diem costs
* software licensing fees
* equipment rental costs
* research expenses, including purchase of data sets and impact measurement
* accessibility costs, for example, sign language interpretation, captioning, audio description, etc.
* costs of sharing results and transferring acquired knowledge to the community

other costs directly related to carrying out your project (must be justified)

The following expenses are also eligible, but subject to certain limits, and must be justified and relevant to the delivery of your project:

* administrative costs cannot exceed 15% of the total grant awarded
* equipment and software purchase costs cannot exceed 15% of the total grant awarded. For more information about [capital expenditures](https://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/capital-expenditures), consult our glossary

fees and costs related to professional arts training, content creation, artistic creation and media production cannot exceed 20% of the total grant awarded.

### Ineligible expenses

Expenses that are **not directly related to carrying out the proposed project**are not eligible, including (but not limited to):

* ongoing operating expenses
* salaries of permanent staff
* deficit reduction costs
* purchase of furniture or general office equipment
* capital construction or renovation costs
* expenses incurred prior to the deadline date

expenses for which funding has already been granted by the Canada Council.

### Assessment - How are decisions made?

If eligible, your application will be assessed, based on the weighted criteria below, by a cross sectoral assessment committee with relevant expertise. Your application must receive a minimum score **in each category** to be considered for a grant.

Applications will be assessed on the following weighted criteria:

**Impact 50%** (minimum score of 35 out of 50)

* The project aims for concrete results and significant expected benefits
* The project benefits more than one artist or organization and, ideally, an entire community or arts sector

There is a plan to share knowledge and results in relevant and appropriate ways

**Relevance 30%** (minimum score of 15 out of 30)

* The project has clearly articulated sectoral challenges or opportunities
* The objectives of the project are aligned with the key strategic areas of the fund
* The proposed activities are relevant, suitable, and consistent with the project’s objectives

The contributing partner(s) are well matched and pertinent

**Feasibility 20%** (minimum score of 10 out of 20)

* The lead applicant, the applicant’s partner(s) and the implementation team members have the experience and expertise needed to successfully carry out the project
* The budget is reasonable, the workplan is realistic and aligned with the project’s objectives

The governance set up to carry out the initiative is effective, with aligned and complementary partner(s) and collaborators

**Accessibility, equity, diversity, social justice, and decolonization (if applicable to the project)**

If your proposed project addresses challenges and gaps related to accessibility, equity, diversity, social justice, and decolonization, you must demonstrate that:

* appropriate cultural protocols for the community/communities involved are being observed

you have the active participation, collaboration, involvement, and empowerment of the specific community/ communities impacted by the project

If your response to this criterion is not satisfactory, your application may be deemed unsuccessful.

### Required information and support material - What you need to apply

Required – When applying, you must provide the following:

* description of your project and what you hope to achieve
* description of the potential beneficiaries
* description of relevant past experience, if any
* list of the partner(s) involved
* letter(s) confirming the engagement of partner(s)
* completed budget and appendices document including budget notes and confirmed team members

detailed work plan, including timeline

Optional – You may also submit documents that are relevant to the understanding of your project, including executive summaries of relevant studies or research.

Note: The maximum for letters of engagement and other relevant documents is **10 pages in total**.

### Grant payment and final reports

If your application is successful, the first step in receiving your grant payment is to complete the Grant Acceptance Form. Click [here](https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/guide/if-you-receive-a-grant) for more information on the responsibilities of grant recipients.

If your application is successful, your response to question 1.6 in the application form (Brief description of the proposed initiative) will be included in the Council’s public announcement of results.

A final report will be due 3 months after you complete the project.

### Contact information

If you require additional information or guidance, contact [innovationfund@canadacouncil.ca](mailto:innovationfund@canadacouncil.ca) before submitting your application.

PREVIEW: Application form

This is not an official application form. You must use the portal to apply.

Use simple text formatting if you prepare your application outside of the portal. Formatted text uses additional characters, and some formatting may be lost when copied over.

**\*** = required

## Grant description

1. Give your application a name. \* (approximately 10 words)

The name you provide is for your reference and will identify this grant application in your dashboard.

1. For groups and organizations, provide the name of the contact person responsible for this application. (approximately 10 words)
2. Provide a one-sentence summary of your project. If possible, use the format ACTIVITY and DATE. \* (approximately 25 words)

For example, “To complete project XXX from day/month to, day/month.”

This summary will be used in the Canada Council’s official reporting.

1. Project start date \*

This date must be after the deadline date.

1. Project end date \*
2. Brief description of the proposed project \* (approximately 100 words)

If your application is successful, your response will be included in the Council’s public announcement of results.

1. Context and background \* (approximately 250 words)

Briefly describe the context in which you (the lead applicant) and your partner(s) work and how this context informed your decision to undertake the proposed project.

1. Project objectives \* (approximately 250 words)

What are the main objectives of your project and how do they align with the fund’s key strategic areas, such as building a more resilient, sustainable, equitable, accessible, greener, healthier and/or connected arts sector?

1. Sectoral challenges \* (approximately 250 words)

What are the systemic issues, sectoral challenges, gaps or opportunities that you wish to address through this project?

1. What research, analysis or self-reflection led you to identify these challenges or opportunities? \* (approximately 250 words)
2. Anticipated impact and measurement \* (approximately 250 words)

What are the anticipated impacts of your project? How will you measure these impacts?

1. Who will benefit \* (approximately 100 words)

Who will benefit from your project? (Artists? Arts organizations? The arts sector? The broader community?)

1. Briefly outline your work plan including timeline. \* (approximately 250 words)

Identify key steps and the dates for their completion.

1. How will you share the results of your project? \* (approximately 100 words)
2. Expertise and capacity \* (approximately 250 words)

Describe the experience and expertise you (the lead applicant) and your partner(s) have to successfully undertake this project. Include information such as your background/mandate, team size and capacity, as applicable. How are the contributing partner(s) pertinent to the project? To be eligible, you must have at least one confirmed partner.

1. Other partner groups or organizations \*

Provide the information below for up to 10 other **confirmed** groups or organizations partnering in this project.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group or org name | Website | Municipality | Postal code |
|  |  |  |  |

1. Project governance \* (approximately 100 words)

Describe the governance structure in place to ensure effective decision-making and reporting mechanisms among project partner(s).

1. If your proposed activity addresses challenges or opportunities related to accessibility, equity, diversity, social justice, or decolonization, please describe your relationship to these challenges or communities. How will you ensure that appropriate cultural protocols are being observed? How will you ensure that you have the active participation, collaboration, involvement, and empowerment of the specific community/communities impacted by the project? (approximately 250 words)
2. If your proposed activity touches upon Indigenous traditional knowledge, linguistic or cultural intellectual property, please describe your relationship to this content and how appropriate protocols are/will be observed or addressed. (approximately 100 words)
3. If there is anything that has not been asked that is essential to understanding your application, provide it here. (approximately 100 words)

Do not use this space to provide additional information related to earlier questions.

## Type of activity

1. Alignment with key strategic fund areas \*

Check the primary themes your project addresses (maximum of 3):

* Strengthening the resilience and sustainability of the arts sector, including new business and revenue models
* Advancing social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the arts
* Increasing the accessibility of arts and culture for people who are Deaf or have disabilities
* Decolonizing the arts sector
* Creating a greener arts sector
* Stimulating the digital transformation of the arts sector
* Improving the health, wellbeing, and financial security of artists and arts professionals
* Building networks and partnerships to strengthen the arts ecosystem and the role of arts in society
* Amplifying the benefit of the arts for thriving communities

1. Proposed project activities \*

Check all that apply:

* Research activities
* Project exploration, planning, and development activities
* Evaluation and knowledge sharing activities
* Partnership and networking building activities
* Organizational transformation activities
* Prototyping or piloting activities
* Testing and optimization activities
* Implementation activities
* Not applicable

1. Other project activities (please describe). (approximately 100 words)
2. Benefits \*

Your answer to this question will be used for research and measurement purposes. It will not be used to assess your application.

What are the anticipated main benefits of your proposed project?  Check all that apply:

* Sharing knowledge
* Strategizing for the future
* Improving collection and analysis of data
* Adoption of new and innovative ways of working
* Developing capacity for innovation
* Increasing accessibility and removing barriers
* Building new partnerships and networks

## Budget and appendices

1. Complete the Budget and appendices document. \*
2. Grant amount requested \*

Up to $250 000

This amount must match the requested amount in your completed budget. If successful, you might not be awarded the full amount requested. Do not include expenses that are not eligible.

**$**

## Required documents

Upload applicable documents for your application.

The maximum for letters of engagement and other relevant documents is **10 pages in total.**

1. (Required) Upload letter(s) confirming the engagement of partner(s). \*
2. (Optional) Upload documentation that is relevant to the understanding of your project, including executive summaries of relevant studies or research.