Strategic Innovation Fund

Seed Grants

### Outcomes

### 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.

Projects must respond to one or more 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

**The following guidelines are for the Seed** **component**, which supports small-scale activities to explore and develop innovation projects and partnerships that address systemic issues in the arts sector.

If you are the lead applicant, you may be eligible for [Application Assistance](http://canadacouncil.ca/commitments/equity/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) – Any time before the start date of your project.

### Notification of results – Consult the [Deadlines and Notifications of Results page](https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/deadlines)

### Grant amount – Up to $25 000

### Application limits

You can apply to this component twice in one 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 initiative 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 supports small-scale activities intended to explore and develop innovation projects that address systemic issues in the arts sector. Projects must respond to key strategic areas intended to rebuild a more resilient, sustainable, equitable, accessible, greener, healthier, and connected arts sector (refer to the Overview section above for more details).

Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

* Sector research and exploration activities. Example: an environmental scan of resources that nurture the health and well-being of Deaf and disability artists; a research study that brings Indigenous artists and scientists together to develop practices that are more connected, respectful, and sustainable with the land, water, plants, and animals.
* Planning and project development activities. Example: development of project plan, partnerships and key performance indicators for a collaborative, large-scale transformation project designed to create an eco-friendly touring model.
* Evaluation, gathering, and knowledge sharing activities. Example: development of an Indigenous-lead online platform to share knowledge, stay connected and provide accessibility and sustainability to tradition, culture, arts, and language.
* Partnership and network building activities. Example: development of a network designed to foster collaboration between official language minority arts organizations and the health sector.
* Organizational transformation activities that demonstrate the potential to significantly increase the resilience, responsiveness, inclusion, social relevance and sustainability of groups and organizations. Example: planning for a merger or amalgamation; implementation of sustainable practices to decrease your organization’s carbon footprint; development of a social enterprise model for your organization.

**Ineligible activities**

* regular and ongoing operating activities
* creating, producing, programming, or presenting artistic work

**You cannot apply for** activities that occur before your project start date, 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
* public 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)

### 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 your application submission 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 by internal or external assessors on the following weighted criteria and must receive a minimum score **in each category** to be considered for a grant.

Applications will be assessed on the following weighted criteria:

**Relevance and Impact 70%** (minimum score of 45 out of 70)

* The project has clearly articulated sectoral challenges or opportunities
* The objectives of the project are aligned with the key strategic areas of the fund (refer to the Overview section above for more details)
* The proposed activities are relevant, suitable, and consistent with the project’s objectives
* There is an appropriate and relevant plan to share knowledge and results with the community

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

* The team leading the project has the expertise and capacity to successfully carry out the project
* The budget is reasonable, the workplan is realistic and aligned with the project’s objectives

**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
* budget including budget notes
* list of confirmed key team members and their roles (budget appendix)
* detailed work plan, including timeline

Optional – You may also submit as support material

* letters of engagement from partners
* executive summaries of relevant studies or research

*Note: The maximum number of pages for support material is 3 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 date you submit your application.

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

If your application is successful, your response to this question 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 work and how this context informed your decision to undertake the proposed project.

1. Sectoral challenges \* (approximately 250 words)

What are the sectoral challenges 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. Project objectives? \* (approximately 250 words)

What are the main objectives of your project and how do they align with the fund’s strategic areas?

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 100 words)

Describe the experience and expertise you and/or your partners (if applicable) have to successfully undertake this project.

1. Partner groups or organizations, if applicable.

If you are undertaking a collaborative project, provide the information below for other **confirmed** groups and organizations. If you have more than 10 groups or partners, only provide information for up to 10 key partner organizations.

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

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. Proposed research, exploration, planning and project development activities \*

Check all that apply:

* Planning, feasibility study, consultation, analysis
* Research, studies, information gathering
* Knowledge gathering with community leaders or elders
* Strategic Foresight
* Developing partnerships and shared governance models
* Not applicable

1. Other activities related to research, exploration planning and project development activities (please describe) (approximately 100 words)
2. Proposed evaluation, gathering and knowledge sharing activities \*

Check all that apply:

* Development of project measurement framework
* Evaluation of impact
* Workshop, webinar, group training or toolkit
* Dissemination of information (e.g., blog, newsletter, vlog)
* Oral dissemination (storytelling, knowledge circles, etc.)
* Not applicable

1. Other activities related to evaluation, gathering and knowledge sharing activities (please describe) (approximately 100 words)
2. Proposed partnership and network building activities \*

Check all that apply:

* Developing shared resources
* Developing local or regional networks
* Developing international networks
* Developing sectoral partnerships
* Developing cross-sectoral partnerships beyond the arts sector
* Not applicable

1. Other activities related to partnership and network building activities (please describe) (approximately 100 words)
2. Organizational transformation activities \*

Check all that apply:

* Merging or amalgamating multiple organizations
* Creating shared resources to benefit multiple organizations
* Developing a new business or revenue model
* Building policies / practices / systems based on traditional knowledges
* Evaluation of organizational baselines (carbon footprint, diversity, etc.)
* Greening your organization
* Advancing the diversity and equity of your organization
* Not applicable

1. Other activities related to organizational transformation 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

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

Up to $25 000

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

1. (Optional) Please upload applicable support documents for your application:

* letters of engagement from partners (if applicable)
* executive summary of studies

*Only submit a maximum of 3 pages for combined documents. If you submit more than the   
3-page maximum allowable, the assessment committee will only look at the first 3 pages.*