



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Presentation for applicants

Qualifying Dates

Round 1 Deadline for applications : Thursday 29th May 5.30pm

For festivals that commence between 1 January 2026 and 30 June 2026

Round 2 Deadline for applications : Thursday 20th November 5.30pm

For festivals that commence between 1 July 2026 and 31 December 2026



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

This presentation will cover:

1. The award -

General Information, The purpose and priorities of the award, How it works, Who can apply?
How much you can apply for.

2. Setting out your application proposal -

Your organisation and your track record, What do you want to do ? Who is it for? How much will it cost and who will manage it? What supporting materials I should provide and making sure my application is eligible!

3. Next Steps -

What happens to my application, When do I get a result ? What should I expect? Things I should consider when making my application!



The Award

Understanding the Festival Investment Scheme

Festival Investment Scheme 2026

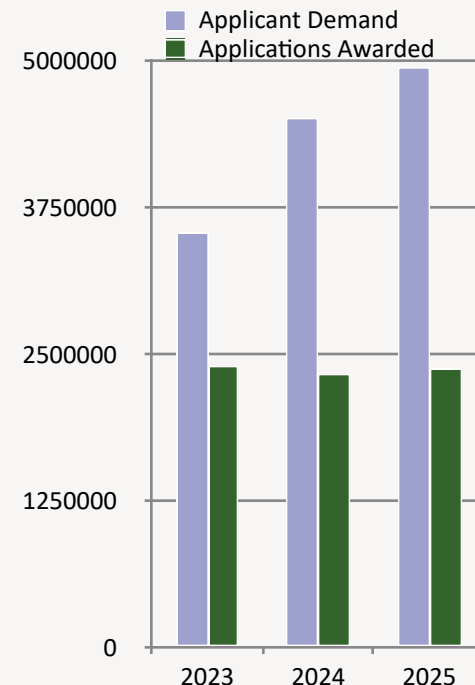
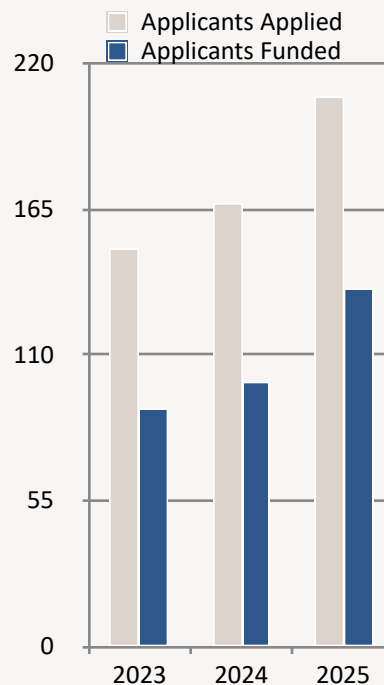
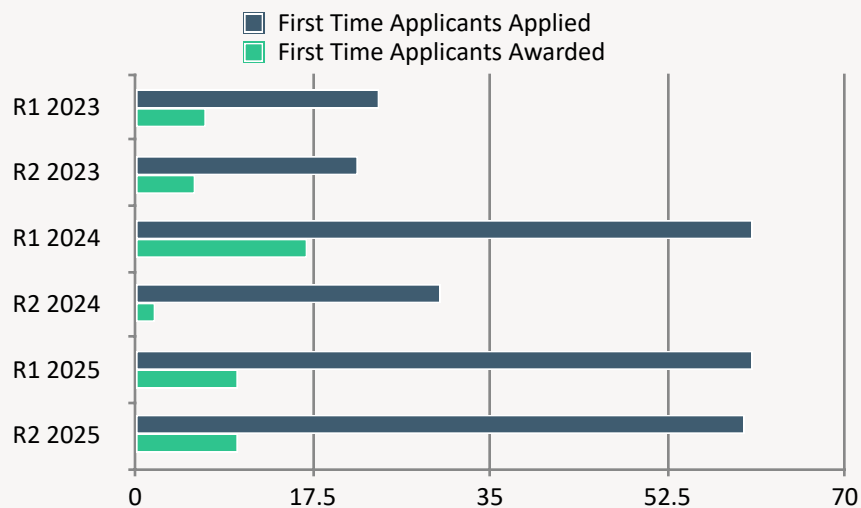
General Information

The Festival Investment Scheme is a **non-recurring funding scheme** and **funding is offered on a once-off basis**, therefore applicants who have been funded before should **NOT** assume that they will receive funding.

15% of FIS award recipients in 2025 received an award at the full request*

13% of first time applicants were successful in receiving an award*

The average award offered under this funding scheme in 2025 was €15,279 *



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

About the Award

The Arts Council's role is to advocate for and support the development of a diverse and varied **arts**-festival ecology, and to provide a suite of supports that encourage best-practice festival models that increase opportunities for public engagement and participation in the arts or develop the work of an artist/artform.

In this regard the Arts Council offers financial support to small-to-mid-scale festivals to deliver high-quality arts experiences for audiences, and prioritises programmes engaged with, and relevant to, local communities or communities of interest.

The Arts Council acknowledges the diversity of festival operating models and the rich variety of artform-practice areas presented by festivals and their critical role in broadening public access to the arts. In this regard the **Arts Council welcomes applications from organisations operating annual, biennial or triennial festival programmes** and supports both **multi-disciplinary arts festivals as well as those in a single artform discipline** through this award.



Diverse Festival Ecology



Arts Experiences for
audiences and programme
engaged with communities



Qualifying Dates

Festival Investment Scheme 2026

About the Award - Scheme structure



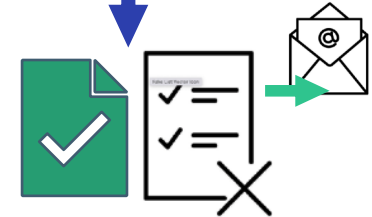
Choosing your application band/
artform area and completing your
application proposal



Submitting your application
through OLS



Closing date for applications
- Thursdays 5.30pm



Eligibility Checks - Does it
have all the supporting
materials required?



Assessment of applications



Shortlisted or Not Shortlisted for
funding consideration based on score



Executive Recommendations



Funded or Unable to Assist



All applicants notified



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

About the Award - Scheme structure



Choosing the correct band of investment

There are three funding bands in the Festivals Investment Scheme and each one is designed to support festivals at different stages of their development. You should choose the one most suitable for your festival organisation.

BAND A

A small festival, a new festival wanting to test new ideas, a festival that is in the early stages of development or a festival without a formal business structure should consider applying to Band A.

Funding available up to
€10,000

BAND B

A small to mid-scale festival, a festival that is seeking to build programme capacity in a particular artform/arts-practice area or which wishes to develop strategies for public engagement should consider applying to Band B.

Note: Organisations **must be** established for a minimum of **three years** and have executed **three consecutive festival programmes** as a minimum requirement to apply to this band.

Funding available between
€10,001–€25,000

BAND C

A mid-scale festival that is strategically led and wishes to develop its capacity in the area of artform development (e.g. co-commissioning, producing, etc.) should consider applying to Band C.

Note: Organisations **must be** established for a minimum of **five years** and have executed **five consecutive festival programmes** as a minimum requirement to apply to this band.

Funding available between
€25,001–€45,000



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

About the Award - Scheme structure

Band Transfers

If applying to Bands B or C, applications may be only moved into a lower band (if eligible):
If there is not sufficient evidence in the application for the band under which you applied, the funding requested is below the financial support available in that band.

Note: applicants will be informed in writing of band transfers if applicable.

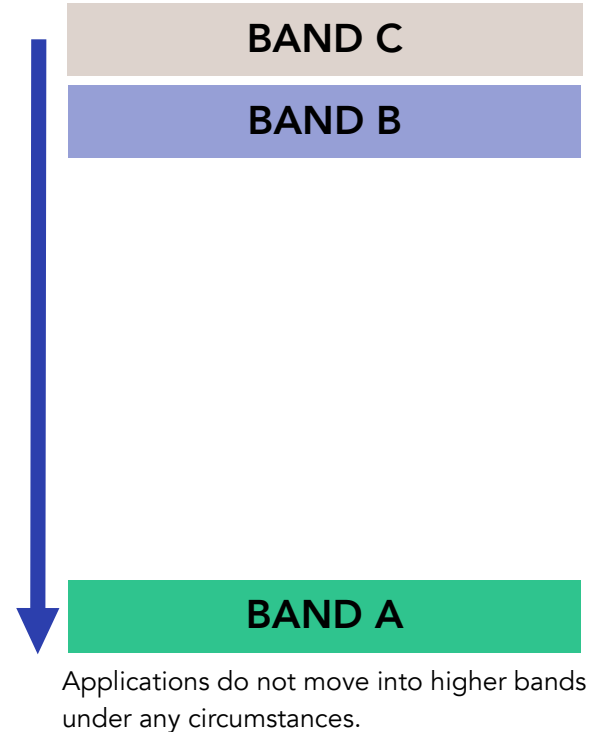
Band Awards

In Bands B&C Awards that are offered may be less than the funding band minimum limit due to the competitive and budgetary context of the scheme.

The Arts Council also reserves the right to award less in circumstances where it considers the information provided to match a lower band of investment than the one to which your organisation applied.



Further information can be found in the **Festival Investment Scheme guidelines.**



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Applicant Guidelines



Further information can be found in the Festival Investment Scheme guidelines.

The Festival Investment Scheme Guidelines are provided for all applicants. They give information **on the award, how to prepare your application**, what **supporting materials you should provide** separate to and in addition to your application form and also **how applications are processed and assessed**.

If you are a recurring applicant to the scheme you should pay close attention to the Changes to the Festival Investment Scheme in **Section 1.1 About the Award**, which outlines changes/updates to both the application guidance and forms on the previous round

Guidance Language

There can be a lot of information to digest but these language rules may help you navigate the guidance information for applicants.

Must This is an instruction. It is compulsory. When you see this in the guidance/application form you **must** complete the request

Should This is a recommendation. It is NOT compulsory but when you see this in the guidance/application form you **should** consider the request.

May This is an optional. When you see this in the guidance/application form you **may** wish to follow the request

Changes to the Festival Investment Scheme 2026.

If you have applied to the Festival Investment Scheme before, please note that we have made changes to both the application form and guidelines. Below is a list of those changes.

Guidelines

Section	What has changed?
1.2 Objectives, purpose and priorities of the Festivals Investment Scheme	We have updated this section in relation to certain programmes of work which are no longer prioritised for funding consideration .
1.5 Who cannot apply?	We have updated this section in relation to organisations and models of practice that are no longer able to apply to the Festival Investment Scheme
1.6 What may you apply for?	We have updated the different types of Disability Access Costs and how to request additional funding support.
1.7 What may not apply for?	We have updated information in relation to fundraising activities, competitions and profit making
1.8 What supporting material to submit with your application?	We have made changes to what types of supporting materials must be provided with your application this affects applications for new festivals and those seeking Participant or Personal Disability costs .
3.2 The assessment process	We have updated this section to include Participant and Personal Access costs .
3.3a Criteria for the assessment of applications – Artistic Quality and artform priorities	We have updated the artform priorities in Table 3 . Please note that some of these have changed. Please ensure that you refer to these ahead of making an application.

Application Form

Section	What has changed?
Section 1 General	1.6 We have changed this section so that you can only select your primary artform area. You must select only one box otherwise your application will NOT upload when you try to submit it via the Arts Council's Online system.
Section 4 – Priorities of the Award	4.2 We have changed the way applicants record their activity reporting and targets. Notes are provided in this section of the application form to support applicants in completing this section.
Section 5 - Financial Management	5.1 We have changed the way we collect information on disability access costs. You must select YES/NO in this section and then follow the instructions. 5.2 We have changed the way we want you to report on artist fees in this section of the application form. Here we expect to see a breakdown of costs. Provide detail about the activity and then the number of artists to be engaged in this activity and then fee per artist. The fee multiplied by the number of artists should be placed in the total column. 5.5 We have added a question about Participant and Personal Disability Access costs in this part of the application form. Please ensure you refer to disability access costs information in section 1.6 What may you apply for? in the <i>Guidelines for Applicants and section 5.1 of the application form before answering this question</i> .
Section 6 - Project Management	6.1 We have added a question for NEW festival applicants only . This allows us to understand the research you have undertaken in relation to your proposal.

Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Applicant Guidelines

Who Can Apply?

Organisations resident in the republic of Ireland
Organisations that satisfy the qualifying dates for the scheme

Organisations that satisfy the requirements of the band applied to

Band A: No restrictions.

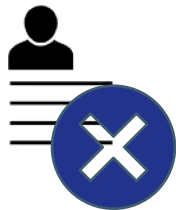
Band B: Organisations established 3 years min

Band C: Organisations established 5 years min



Note

An organisation may make **only one application** under the Festivals Investment Scheme in a year (i.e. one application in one band per calendar year).



Who Cannot Apply?

Organisations that are not eligible to apply under the scheme include the following:

1. **Individuals**
2. Organisations whose proposals are better suited to another funding programme or by another funding agency
3. Commercial organisations that share out profits to members
4. Organisations/festivals based outside of the Republic of Ireland; however, applicants based in the Republic of Ireland may collaborate with an organisation based abroad.
5. Organisations where the dominant element of the programme is competitive in nature
6. **Organisations in receipt of Strategic Funding, Partnership Funding or Arts Centre Funding**
7. **Organisations that have applied for or are in receipt of Arts Grant Funding 2026 to undertake any festival programme**
8. Members of the Council of National Cultural Institutions (CNCI) directly funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
9. Organisations directly funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media for festival programmes in 2026 (including funding offered through the Small Scale Local Festivals and Summer Schools scheme).
10. Organisations proposing festival programmes that fall outside the qualifying dates for this application round. See section **1 About the Festivals Investment Scheme** and section **1.3 Who can apply?**
11. Those organisations where the **dominant feature** of their programme is **non-arts related** such as: **heritage, food, sports, stand-up comedy, roleplaying/historical reenactments or gaming events.**
12. Programmes where there is no benefit to the public such as professional development programmes, conventions, conferences and trade fairs.





Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Applicant Guidelines - Objectives, Purpose & Priorities

Purpose

The Arts Council will achieve the objectives of the Festival Investment Scheme by supporting project proposals that:

- Express an overarching artistic vision that resonates with the nature of the proposed activities and demonstrates **artistic excellence**
- Show evidence of a commitment to the Arts Council's **artform priorities relevant to the programme proposed**
- Demonstrates sound and effective festival and financial management, a track record of excellence, and delivery to a high standard, ensuring the project proposed is **feasible**.
-

Priorities

- Demonstrate **public engagement** by:
 - Evidence of audience-development strategies that provide opportunities for the public to attend arts events and/or to participate in arts activities
 - Providing opportunities for the public to collaborate with artists.
- Demonstrate **festival priorities** by:
 - Producing evidence of a high level of integration with local resources and supports from a diverse range of partners
 - Demonstrating a commitment to collaboration with organisations that support and strengthen the festival's work
 - Showing an understanding of the context/ place the festival is being presented in, and evidence of the value and relevance to the immediate community
 - Evidencing an awareness of artists living in the region, and how the festival is working to support their development.
- Demonstrate **equality, diversity and inclusion priorities** by:
 - Showing how equality, diversity and inclusion are included in the organisation's working practices.

Non priorities

- Proposals for an ongoing-arts event series or arts events/arts activities that are spread throughout a year (e.g. a quarterly or monthly music or literature programme)
- Arts programmes primarily focused on the delivery of workshops series, summer schools, ongoing classes or one-off events, etc.
- Festivals that take place at the same time and in the same location as, or under the auspices of, a Festival supported through the Arts Council's Strategic Funding programme.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Applicant Guidelines

What may you apply for ?



You may apply for funding in relation to activity costs that your festival expects to incur. These might include:

- Artists' fees (including performance fees)
- Venue-rental costs
- Staff costs (e.g. administrative, technical and front-of-house support directly related to the festival)
- Audience development – activity carried out with the objective of developing ongoing relationships with current and new audiences
- Marketing and publicity costs
- Technical and production costs
- Travel costs and expenses for artists
- A contribution to festival programme archiving.



- Disability Access Costs

What may you NOT apply for ?



- Activities that are not arts-related – e.g. events relating to heritage or crafts, , food fairs, stand-up comedy, gaming or sporting events for example.
- Training programmes for individuals or programmes taking place in a formal education setting where the activity does not engage with the local community
- Festival activities that have already taken place or that will have commenced before a decision is made on your application (this excludes research, preparation and planning for your festival programme taking place on the dates outlined in section **3.1** of your application form)
- Activities by registered charities that are for fundraising for other organisations
- Activities that are for participating in a competition
- Activities that are for profit-making
- Once-off academic conferences or symposia with no wider public benefit
- Festival activities taking place outside of the Republic of Ireland
- Capital costs, such as the purchasing of equipment
- Competitive events.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Applicant Guidelines

What may you apply for ?

BAND A - €10,000

The maximum amount that may be awarded to a successful applicant under Band A

BAND B - €25,000

The maximum amount that may be awarded to a successful applicant under Band B

BAND C - €45,000

The maximum amount that may be awarded to a successful applicant under Band C

Access costs for artists or participants with disabilities



1. Participant or personal disability costs

These supports should remove barriers for artists or participants with disabilities who are delivering your proposal. For example:

- The main artists, individuals, groups, or organisations involved in your proposal
- Partners or collaborators
- Production staff
- Core staff or key administrative personnel

Note: You can make an additional funding request for these participant and personal disability access costs.

2. Audience disability access costs

These are costs for making your work accessible to persons with disabilities and should be considered a normal part of your work. We want to ensure that more people enjoy high-quality arts experiences and that everyone can access and enjoy the work we fund.

Example of access costs to make your work accessible to your audience may be:

- Having an ISL interpreter for your event or performance
- Using an audio-description service
- Making your website compatible with screen readers
- Producing exhibition materials in other formats such as in Braille or audio.

Note: You should include audience disability access costs in the total amount that you request. The request must be within the maximum amount available for the award.





Setting Out Your Proposal

Application form and supporting evidence

Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal



Your application proposal that you submit consists of a number of documents.



The Festival Investment Scheme application form.



Supporting materials which are **separate to and in addition** to your application form

Note

All these documents **must be submitted via the Arts Council's Online System** (OLS). We **do not** accept any application materials by post, in-person or email.

Festival Investment Scheme 2026



The Festival Investment Scheme application form is based on a project plan template. After completion you will have a completed project proposal for your festival.

The application form has 7 sections.

Section 1:	General details (15–20mins)	Section 5:	Financial management (2-3 hours) €
Section 2:	Your organisation (30–45mins) 	Section 6:	Project management (60–90mins) 
Section 3:	Your proposal (60–90mins) 	Section 7:	Supporting documentation (5mins) 
Section 4:	Award priorities (2-3 hours)    	Checking application before submission (60mins)	

Note

- The application form takes approximately 10-15 hours to complete; therefore **we strongly advise** that you start your application **giving yourself plenty of time to complete it.**
- It is **not possible to complete the application form** if you start it on the day of the application deadline
- You should allow time to read over what you have proposed and check you have all the information required
- You **must complete all sections of the application form** - any section not relevant should **not** be left blank as this renders your **application ineligible.**



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 1:

General details (15–20mins)

5. Choose the funding band relevant to your application.

The Festivals Investment Scheme has three different funding bands. You may apply to only one of the three bands per calendar year, and you should choose the one most suitable for your festival organisation. You **MUST** choose a band from the tick boxes below.

Important note

Before selecting your funding band below, you should:

- Ensure that your organisation satisfies the minimum requirement to apply to the chosen band (see section 1.3 **Who Can Apply?** in the *Guidelines for Applicants*).
- Ensure you are including the correct supporting materials with your application form (see section 1.8 **What supporting material must you submit with your application?** in the *Guidelines for Applicants*).

Please select the band you are applying for:

(select one box only)

Band A

Band B

Band C ☒

Section 1.5 Please ensure you select the application Band under which you are applying. **You must select only one**

6. Artforms/arts practices relevant to your application

Indicate which artforms/arts practice is most relevant to your application. **Click your primary** artform/arts practice **only**.

Unless you are otherwise notified we will conduct an assessment of your application in the primary artform area that you select; this will be conducted by the team specific to this artform/art practice area.

We may request additional assessments from other artform/art practice areas that we consider to be relevant to your proposal.

Note: If you select more than one box your application will not upload to OLS.

(For information on assessment criteria, please refer to section 3.3a in the *Guidelines for Applicants*.)

Architecture	Arts Participation*	Children and Young People's Arts ☒
Circus	Dance	Film
Irish Language Arts and Irish Literature	Literature	Multidisciplinary Arts (MDA) a programme that features a number of different artforms
Music	Opera	Spectacle
Street Performance	Theatre	Traditional Arts
Visual Arts		

Section 1.6 Select only your primary artform area. If your application contains multiple artforms please select multidisciplinary arts.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 2:

Your organisation (30–45mins)

Section 2.1 Please ensure you fill out the year that your organisation was formed and the amount of festivals that have taken place. This allows us to double check that you qualify for the band under which you are applying

Section 2.2 Please read the guidance notes below the question very carefully; it will guide you on the appropriate and acceptable formats to provide your most recent festival programme.

Note

If you do not provide proof of your most recent festival programme, it may affect your assessment score.

2. Your organisation

1. When was your organisation established?

We want to know how long your festival has been in operation. Please list the year in which it was formed and the number of festivals that have taken place.

Year of formation 2010

Number of festivals that have taken place 15

2. Proof of your most recent festival programme

Below, please provide a URL/weblink to either your festival webpage containing written details of your most recent festival programme or to a streaming platform providing a video of your festival's most recent programme.

- Applicants should **only provide URLs to website pages and/or streaming platforms**.
- **Applicants should test any website links provided** to ensure they direct the person assessing your application to the correct information.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to maintain the website link.
- Links to file-sharing sites (e.g. Google Drive, One Drive) and/or social-media pages (e.g. Instagram, Facebook or X (formerly Twitter)) are **NOT acceptable** (see section 2.3 Supporting material required for the application in the *Guidelines for Applicants*).
- **If you are unable to provide a URL/weblink**, you should upload a brochure of your previous programme or a document with previous-programme information. This should be separate to your application form.
- If you are applying as a **new festival**, you should answer N/A in the boxes below and upload CVs of those managing your festival as a document separate to your application form.

What year did your most recent festival programme take place 2025

Website address of your most recent festival programme www.myfestival.com

If you do not provide proof of your most recent festival programme, it may affect your assessment score.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 2:

Your organisation (30–45mins)

Section 2.3 Here you tell us about your organisation and its achievements and track record. This helps those assessing your application to understand the scope of your work and how it meets the objectives of the award.

Section 2.4 In this section you list all those involved in your project; identifying the nature of their role

3. Tell us about your organisation.

Briefly describe the remit of your organisation and its recent achievements (this may include a short description of the most recent festival, track record and other activities undertaken during the year to support the festival).

If it is a new festival, please describe the track record and expertise of the people managing the project (maximum 2,000 characters including spaces/approx. 300 words).

We host the South-West region's only Children's Arts Festival catering specifically for early years aged 2-5. Four artists from different artform specialisms curate a programme of visual arts, theatre, dance and music

4. Who is involved in your project?

Please list all management and administrative and artistic personnel involved in the festival, identifying the nature of their role (e.g. member of steering committee, artistic curator or programmer, fundraiser, performer or artist).

First name	Surname	Organisation	Involvement in project
Carol	Singer	N/A	Artist
Jack	Jones	N/A	Festival Committee





Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 3:

Your proposal (60–90mins)

What you write here is an important part of your proposal which should set out what you want to do, why you want to do it, when it will take place.

Section 3.1 Here you must put the name of the festival, the location where the festival programme takes place and the dates of the festival. If you do not include the dates of your festival this may render your application ineligible. In this section we check that your festival meets the qualifying dates for the scheme.

Section 3.2 Summarise here the main headlines of your detailed proposal which you will provide in section 3.3 of the application form. You may wish to write your summary after you have written your detailed proposal. Keep the information clear and concise

3. Your proposal

Use this section to set out the substance of your application to the Arts Council.

1. Title, location, and dates of festival

Enter the title, locations (specify the town and county) and dates of your festival (maximum 100 characters including spaces/approx. 16 words).

Take Part Festival, 1-4th May 2026, Skibbereen, Co Cork

2. Summary of your proposal

Please summarise your festival proposal in no more than three short points. There should be up to three headlines about the proposed activity you intend to deliver (maximum 300 characters including spaces/approx. 50 words).

1. Provide a four day children's art festival programme .
2. Provide the only art festival for young people in the South West - addressing gaps in provision.
3. Work with 10 schools in partnership to host an artist festival residency working with 300 school children; this serving the community and supporting artist development,





Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 3:

Your proposal (60–90mins)

Section 3.3 We want to find out how your festival programme demonstrates artistic quality and artform priorities.

What you write here should help those involved in assessing your application to understand what and who will feature in your festival programme? What do you want to do and why? What activities will be presented and what will the outcomes be?

3. Details of your proposal (artistic merit and artform priorities)

In this section we want to find out how your festival programme/proposal demonstrates artistic quality and meets with our artform priorities. Before completing this section, you should refer to the artistic merit and artform priorities in section **3.3A Criteria for the assessment of applications** in the *Guidelines for Applicants*

What you write here should help those involved in assessing your application to understand:

- What you want to do and why? – outline the format and the rationale for your festival
- What will you deliver? – What and who will feature in your festival programme
- ‘How will your Festival support the development of artform(s) and develop capacity among artists?’
- How does your festival proposal fulfill the artform priorities?
 - (as outlined in the *Guidelines for Applicants* in section **3.3 Criteria for the assessment of applications – Table 3** in your chosen artform/arts practice).

Note to assist applicants.

In support of your application, you may provide (in addition to what you outline below) a draft programme for 2026. This should be uploaded as a document separate to this application form.





Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 3:

Your proposal (60–90mins)

Section 3.3 We want to find out how your festival programme demonstrates artistic quality and artform priorities.

What you write here should help those involved in assessing your application to understand what and who will feature in your festival programme? What do you want to do and why? What activities will be presented and what will the outcomes be?

We also want to find out how your proposal fulfils the artform priorities. These can be found in the application guidelines. Identify the primary artform area under which you will make your application. You should demonstrate how your proposal meets these priorities.

3. Details of your proposal (artistic merit and artform priorities)

In this section we want to find out how your festival programme/proposal demonstrates artistic quality and meets with our artform priorities. Before completing this section, you should refer to the artistic merit and artform priorities in section 3.3A Criteria for the assessment of applications in the *Guidelines for Applicants*

What you write here should help those involved in assessing your application to understand:

- What you want to do and why? – outline the format and the rationale for your festival
- What will you deliver? – What and who will feature in your festival programme
- 'How will your Festival support the development of artform(s) and develop capacity among artists?'
- How does your festival proposal fulfil the artform priorities?
 - (as outlined in the *Guidelines for Applicants* in section 3.3 Criteria for the assessment of applications – Table 3 in your chosen artform/arts practice).

Note to assist applicants.

In support of your application, you may provide (in addition to what you outline below) a draft programme for 2026. This should be uploaded as a document separate to this application form.

Table 3

Artform/arts-practice area	Priority
Architecture	• Provide opportunities to the public to access high quality architecture programmes (exhibitions, discussions, events etc) with a view to increasing public awareness and understanding of architecture as an art form and its role in society. •
Arts Participation	• Include the creation and/or presentation of artistically ambitious work that is developed by professional artists in collaboration with non-arts professionals (individuals or groups) • Include a clear outline of rationale and methodologies for engagement and artistic collaboration with participants • Provide opportunities for artistic collaboration between artists, individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds, in alignment with Arts Council Equality Human Rights and Diversity Policy (Cultural Diversity and the Arts; Equality, Human Rights & Diversity policy.)
Children and Young People's Arts	• Have a particular commitment to, or focus on, children or young people's engagement with quality arts experiences • Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the targeted age group(s), and include strategies for developing and improving young people's personal engagement with the arts • Include strategies to ensure children and young people from socially and/or culturally diverse backgrounds can participate in the festival • Provide opportunities for children and young people to participate in and inform the planning and/or evaluation of the artistic programme.
Circus	• Present artistically ambitious, high-quality proposals that demonstrate excellent skill level in a variety of circus disciplines. • Proposals developed in collaboration with local authorities and/or formal organisations with an established track record in the delivery of arts services and/or artistic programmes (e.g. arts centre, resource organisations, production companies, etc.).
Dance	• Present artistically ambitious dance, across genres, with a focus on high-quality public performances and seek to develop new communities for dance. • Support partnerships, co-production and collaboration across the dance and wider arts sector. • Demonstrate the capacity to contribute to broader artform and audience development of Irish-based and international dance works.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 4:

Award priorities (2-3 hours)

Section 4.1 In this section we want to find out how the work of your festival meets with 3 areas of interest to the Arts Council.

Public Engagement



Festival Priorities



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



4. Priorities of the award

1. In this section we want to find out how your festival programme/proposal demonstrates and meets with the priorities of the award. The priorities are broken into three areas:
 - **Public engagement**
 - (In a festival context we recognise public engagement as: audience members, readers, listeners, attendees or other consumers, volunteers, participants, or public collaborators.)
 - **Festival priorities**
 - **Equality, diversity, and inclusion**

Before completing this question, you should refer to section **1.2 Objectives, purpose, and priorities of the Festivals Investment Scheme** in the *Guidelines for Applicants*.

Note to assist applicants.

What you write here should help those involved in assessing your application to understand:

In Public Engagement:

- What are your plans or goals for encouraging the public to engage/collaborate with your festival? How will you measure these plans and how will you know if you have been successful?
- How does your festival sustain and build upon existing audiences? Do you have plans to attract new audience?

In Festival Priorities:

- What evidence is there of partnerships or collaborations your organisation has developed/is developing, and how will these deliver on the festival's purpose or strengthen the work of your festival?
- What examples of work are being undertaken with local artists, and how are they being supported to develop their practice?
- How is your festival relevant to, and integrated with, the place and community where it takes place?

In Equality, diversity, and inclusion:

- How does your organisation consider equality, diversity and inclusion in the selection of artists for your programme/personnel/staff for your festival?
- How does your organisation consider equality, diversity and inclusion in your public-engagement plans?
- What evidence is there of your organisation having developed or implemented equality, diversity and inclusion measures (i.e., policy development, training)?



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 4:

Award priorities (2-3 hours)

Section 4.1 In this section we want to find out how the work of your festival meets with 3 areas of interest to the Arts Council.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



How does your organisation consider equality, diversity and inclusion in the selection of artists/personnel/staff for your festival?

How does your organisation consider equality, diversity and inclusion in your public-engagement plans?

What evidence is there of your organisation having developed or implemented equality, diversity and inclusion measures (i.e., policy development, training)?

Festival Priorities



What evidence is there of partnerships or collaborations your organisation has developed/is developing, and how will these deliver on the festival's purpose or strengthen the work of your festival?

What examples of work are being undertaken with local artists, and how are they being supported to develop their practice?

How is your festival relevant to, and integrated with, the place and community where it takes place?

Public Engagement

PARTICIPATION + VOLUNTEERING
+AUDIENCES



What are your plans or goals for encouraging the public to engage/ collaborate with your festival? How will you measure these plans and how will you know if you have been successful?

How does your festival sustain and build upon existing audiences? Do you have plans to attract new audience?



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 4:

Award priorities (2-3 hours)

Public Engagement

PARTICIPATION + VOLUNTEERING
+ AUDIENCES



Section 4.2 In this section we want to find out about your estimated public engagement activity for 2026 and your public engagement for previous years. If you are a previously funded organisation of the Festival Investment Scheme you should use your 2024 and 2025 report form to complete these sections.

What you write in 4.1 should be reflected in section 4.2 of the application form.

Table Notes Each of the notes is numbered to correspond with the line of the table - here you will find more information on how to count and calculate your activity and engagements.

Category	2026	2025	2024
1. Number of performances ¹ (if any)	10	10	12
2. Number of exhibition days ² (if any)	0	0	0
3. Number of workshops, classes, participatory activity ³ (if any)	30	20	10
4. TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES⁴	40	30	22
5. Audience/Participants attending in-person events ⁵	1000	900	800
6. Audience/Participants attending digital events ⁶	0	0	0
7. TOTAL AUDIENCES/PARTICIPANTS⁷	1000	900	800
Total number of volunteers engaged ⁸	15	10	10

Table Notes to assist applicants.

If you are a recipient of Festival Investment Scheme Funding for 2025 or 2024 you can use your reporting figures to complete these columns in the tables above.

Your costs/income associated with your activity/engagement targets for 2026 should be reflected in the financial Sections **5.2/5.3 of the application form**. This might include:

- The costs for the number of performances, exhibitions, or workshops that you estimated.
- The activity income (box office) you expect to generate from performances or workshops.
- The Benefit-In-Kind Expenditure/Income you expect from volunteering labour.

¹ Here we refer to performances as presenting activities for an audience, for example: concerts, talks, lectures, screenings, parades, traditional sessions, shows.

² Here we refer to exhibitions as displays of works of art or items of interest (this could be photographic presentations, fine art, window art trails, public sculpture trails etc.). To calculate the total, you should count the days a collection is exhibited for, i.e., 2 exhibitions running for 7 days = 2x7=14 days.

³ Here we refer to workshops as a meeting where a group of people engage in an activity- this could be a seminar, session, circus, drama or dance class, work in schools with classes, a book club). To calculate the total number, you should count the amount of time workshops take/took place irrespective of whether it is the same workshop that is repeated for different participants.





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Section 5:

Financial management (2-3 hours)

This part of the application form helps us to understand how you budget for your festival programme, what costs are required, what income you are estimating, how you manage public monies and how you provide fair and equitable conditions for artists.

In this section, this is where you make your request for financial support from the Arts Council

You should expect to see the following sections

Section 5.1 Disability Access Costs 

Section 5.2 Budget - Expenditure related to your proposal

Section 5.3 Budget - Income related to your proposal

Section 5.4 Calculate your funding request

Section 5.5 Additional funding request for Participant or Personal Disability Access Costs 

Section 5.6 Pay & Conditions for Artists

Section 5.7 Managing Budgets





Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 5:

Financial management (2-3 hours)

Section 5.1 Disability Access Costs

In this section you **MUST** answer the two questions.

If you answer 'yes' to any of the two questions you must follow the instructions provided below the table.

If you answer 'no' to both questions you can proceed to section 5.2.

Audience Disability Access Costs **MUST** be included in your overall budget expenditure in section 5.2

You can make an additional funding request for Participant or personal disability access costs and these figures **MUST** be entered into Section 5.5 of the application form in addition to providing **mandatory supporting information**

5. Financial management

1. Disability Access Costs

Indicate here if you are applying for disability access costs.

	Yes/No
1. Participant or personal disability access costs*	YES
2. Audience disability access costs**	YES

If you answered 'Yes' to '1. Participant or personal disability access costs*' you **must** submit a Personal Disability Access Costs document detailing these costs as separate line items. We strongly recommend that you use the DAC template which is available on the Festival Investment Scheme funding page [here](#). You **must also** include the total value of these costs in **Section 5.5** of the application form below. (**Additional Request for Participant or personal access costs**)

Note:

If you do not provide a Personal Disability Access Costs document, then Participant or personnel disability access costs will not be considered.

* These are costs for participants with disabilities involved in the proposal. You can apply for these costs in addition to the amount available for the award.

If you answered 'Yes' to '2. Audience disability access costs**' you are required to put the total amount of these costs into the Production, Technical and Audience Disability Access costs in **section 5.2** of the application form only (**Detailed budget expenditure related to your application**).

Note:

** These are costs for enabling persons with disabilities to attend, view or engage with the work and should be considered a normal part of your work and included in your production costs.

If you answered 'No' to both then please continue to **Section 5.2** of the application form.

Section 5.2 Budget - Expenditure related to your proposal

Section 5.3 Budget - Income related to your proposal

Section 5.4 Calculate your funding request

Section 5.5 Additional funding request for Participant or Personal Disability Access Costs

Section 5.6 Pay & Conditions for Artists

Section 5.7 Managing Budgets



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 5:

Financial management (2-3 hours)

Section 5.2 Budget - Expenditure related to your proposal

In this section you **MUST** total all your costs. Make sure to double check the tally and also check that the information you put here matches the information you placed in other parts of the application form.

If you include Benefit-in-Kind costs ensure the same figure is reflected in the income budget too

Benefit-In-Kind income must **ONLY** be placed in the In-Kind Income section and nowhere else in this section.

Artistic Costs

In artistic costs you should provide as much detail as possible about the costs associated with your artistic activity; this maybe: the type of activity, rates of pay for artists, number of artist engagements (i.e., performances, commissions, exhibitions, events etc.)

Item of expenditure	Details	Total (€)
ARTISTIC COSTS		
Commission Fees	1 artist x 5k fee	5,000
Performances Fees	2 artist x 5 sessions x 500	5,000
Performances Fees	5 artist x 5 sessions x 500	12,500
Workshop Fees	1 artist x 30 workshops x 300	9,000
PRODUCTION, TECHNICAL AND AUDIENCE DISABILITY ACCESS		
Venue-hire costs	Town Hall Theatre 2 days Hire	1000
Technical staffing	Tech Staff x 2 x 2 days	1000
Technical equipment costs	Additional Sound EQ	500
Other production costs (please detail)		0.00

Audience Disability Access Costs	Ramp Access for audiences Please refer to disability access costs information in section 1.6 What may you apply for? in the Guidelines for Applicants	500
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MARKETING COSTS

Design & printing costs	1000
Advertising costs	500
PR & promotion	0.00
Other marketing costs (please detail)	0.00

ACCOMMODATION & TRAVEL

Accommodation costs	5 artists x 100 x 5 days	2500
Travel costs	Travel Stipend 200 x 5 artists	1000
Other (please detail)		0.00

ADMINISTRATION COSTS

Administration, staffing costs	Administrator Fee 1000 x 12 months	12,000
Stationary, postage, etc.	Office Supplies	300
Other administration costs (please detail)		0.00

FINANCIAL COSTS

Contingency	Contingency 7% of cash spend	4100
Other financial costs	Bookkeeper Fee	700
In-kind expenditure	Volunteers 15 x 29 per hour x 40 hours	17400

TOTAL EXPENDITURE 74,000

Section 5.3 Budget - Income related to your proposal Section 5.4 Calculate your funding request

Section 5.5 Additional funding request for Participant or Personal Disability Access Costs Section 5.6 Pay & Conditions for Artists Section 5.7 Managing Budgets



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 5:

Financial management (2-3 hours)

Section 5.3 Budget - Income related to your proposal

In this section you **MUST** total all your pending and confirmed income. Make sure to double check the tally and also check that the information you put here matches the information you placed in other parts of the application form.

If you include Benefit-in-Kind income ensure the same figure is reflected in the expenditure budget too

Benefit-In-Kind income must **ONLY** be placed in the In-Kind Income section and nowhere else in this section.

Box Office Income

If you include box office as an item of income, please provide details of how this is estimated and calculated. Do you estimate your box office sales based upon previous box office records? Are your estimates based on achieving a certain percentage of sales? Please provide information and/or calculations in the 'details' boxes provided.

Item of Income	Details	Confirmed (C) or Pending (P)	Amount (€)
INCOME FROM ACTIVITIES			
Box office (please detail)	Venue Cpx 1000 (@30%) = 300 x10 euro =		3,000
Other (please detail)	Workshops Admission 80x 10 Euro		800
Other (please detail)			0.00
PUBLIC FUNDING			
Local-authority grants	Co Cork Arts Grant	P	10,000
Failte Ireland			0.00
Leader funding			0.00
Creative Ireland	Development Grant	C	4,000
Ealaín na Gaeltachta			0.00
Embassy funding			0.00
INCOME NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO ACTIVITIES			
Sponsorship (please detail)	An Post	C	1,000
Donations (please detail)	Private Donor	C	500
Advertising & merchandising			0.00
Friend Schemes (please detail)			0.00
OTHER INCOME			
Surplus from a previous festival programme	2025 surplus	C	1000
Other (please detail)			0.00
In-kind income (please detail)	Volunteer In-Kind	C	17,400
TOTAL INCOME			37,700

Section 5.4 Calculate your funding request

Section 5.5 Additional funding request for Participant or Personal Disability Access Costs

Section 5.6 Pay & Conditions for Artists

Section 5.7 Managing Budgets



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 5:

Financial management (2-3 hours)

Section 5.4 Calculate your funding request

In this section you are calculating your funding request which is your total expenditure minus your total income.

You MUST ensure that your request is within the limit of the band under which you applied.

You MUST NOT exceed the maximum of the bands under any circumstances.

Band A - Maximum award is €10,000

Band B - Maximum award is €25,000

Band C - Maximum award is €45,000

4. Calculate your funding request from the Arts Council

To calculate your funding request, you must subtract your TOTAL EXPENDITURE (section 5.2) from your TOTAL INCOME (section 5.3).

Total income (place the total figure from section 5.3 Income into this box)	37,700
Total expenditure (place the total figure from section 5.2 Expenditure into this box)	74,000

Amount requested from the Arts Council towards your festival (€) <i>This is the total figure in section 5.3 minus the total figure in section 5.2</i>	36,300
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Note: please make sure the amount requested does **not** exceed the funding-band limit under which you are applying.

Section 5.5 Additional funding request for Participant or Personal Disability Access Costs Section 5.6 Pay & Conditions for Artists Section 5.7 Managing Budgets





Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 5:

Financial management (2-3 hours)

Section 5.5 Additional funding request for Participant or Personal Disability Access Costs

You only need to fill in this section if you require Participant or Personal disability access costs. If you do not require these costs you should put 'zero' or 'n/a' into the table.

Participant or Personal disability access costs are costs that you can ask the Arts Council to support as an additional funding request.

In order for us to consider these costs you **must have** :

1. Selected '**yes**' in **Section 5.1** of the application form confirming that you are applying for these costs
2. **Uploaded a document** (separate and in addition to your application form) which outlines a **breakdown and total of these costs**.
3. Placed the total of your Participant and personal disability access costs in **section 5.5 of the application form**. The total in your supporting document must match the total in the application form.

5. Additional Request for Participant or personal disability access costs*

Below you may make an additional funding request for Participant or personal disability access costs. Please list the total amount of these costs below, as outlined in your supporting document.

If you are not requesting these costs, please enter zero into the amount.

Amount requested from the Arts Council towards Participant or personal disability access costs*. (€)

5,000

Please refer to disability access information in section **1.6 What may you apply for?** in the *Guidelines for Applicants*.

Section 5.6 Pay & Conditions for Artists Section 5.7 Managing Budgets



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 5:

Financial management (2-3 hours)

Section 5.6 Pay & Conditions for Artists

Here we want to find out how you will ensure that artists will receive fair pay and conditions and how you benchmark these fees; what research do you undertake?

You should ensure that what you write here matches the information you have provided in your budget expenditure budget and other parts of the application form.

Section 5.7 Managing Budgets

In this section we want to find out how you will manage the budget you have included in your proposal. You should tell us what experience your organisation has in managing budgets and what measures or protections are in place to protect public money.

6. Pay and conditions for artists.

Please provide details about how you will ensure that artists will receive fair pay and conditions (maximum 900 characters including spaces/approx. 150 words).

Note

Assessors will also refer to the information you provided on artist fees in your expenditure budget (5.2 of the application form) as well as the information you provide below to understand your approach to ensuring fair and equitable remuneration of artists.

Please refer to note 3 on artists' pay in section 1.6 **What may you apply for?** in the *Guidelines for Applicants*.

7. Managing budgets

Briefly tell us about your experience in managing budgets and describe how you will manage the proposed festival budget. What safeguards are in place within your organisation to ensure that the financial management of the festival is carried out with due diligence and protects the management of public monies?

(Maximum 600 characters including spaces/approx. 100 words)



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 6:

Project management (60–90mins)

This part of the application form helps us to understand how you manage your festival programme from planning to delivery and evaluation.

In this section you should expect to see these four questions.

Section 6.1 Project Research (New Festivals Only)

You **should only** fill this section out if you are proposing a new festival. Here we want to find out what research you have conducted before making your festival proposal to the Arts Council.

1. Project Research (New Festivals Only)

We want to know what research you have conducted to assess the viability of your project.

For example:

What evidence is there for public demand of your festival?

Does your festival address deficits in artistic provision in your area, if so, what is the evidence for this?

How does your festival offer something distinct to other festivals or arts providers in your region?

Section 6.3 Activity plan

Here we want to find out the stages of planning, preparation and delivery of your festival programme. Here you should provide a detailed timeline with milestone/significant deadlines

3. Activity plan

To give us a clear understanding of how your project will be managed, we would like to know about your planning and preparation and see a project plan for your proposed festival activity.

Please identify the main stages or milestone dates of any planning and preparation, including significant deadlines.

(Maximum 2,000 characters including spaces/approx. 300 words)

Section 6.2 Budget - Organisation and delivery

Here we want to find out how you manage your festival programme. What expertise or experience does your organisation have in delivering festival programmes and or events. Who is responsible for specific aspects of your festival programme. If you are a new festival please read the section note.

2. Organisation and delivery

Describe your organisation's management structure and give a brief outline of the project management of the festival. This may include outlining your management structure, the function of any management committees, who is responsible for which aspects of festival delivery, or how the festival is staffed.

Note

If you are a NEW festival applicant, you may wish to outline the experience of those proposed to manage your festival programme. What skills and expertise do they possess that will support the effective management and delivery of your festival programme?

(Maximum 1,200 characters including spaces/approx. 200 words)

Section 6.4 Evaluation

Here we want to find out what measures are in place to evaluate your festival programme and what impact does this evaluation have on your festival?

4. Evaluation

Please summarise in no more than five short points how you will evaluate your festival activity when it is completed. This might be how you collect data on your audience and artists, the visitor experience of your festival, or the success of your programme.

(Maximum 450 characters including spaces/approx. 75 words)





Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 7:

Supporting documentation (5mins)

Supporting documents are **separate from** and **additional to** your application form. There are different types of supporting documentation and these are listed below:

Mandatory

You **must** upload this documentation with your application. If these are not included your application **will be deemed ineligible for assessment**.

If relevant

You need to upload this documentation if it is relevant to your application – e.g. if you work with animals, you need to include your Animal Welfare Statement. If you do not provide these materials this will affect the consideration of your application in assessment.

Optional

You may wish to provide these materials if you believe it supports your application

Not required

You do not need to provide these materials with your application.

NOTE

The supporting material you are required to provide with your application will depend on the application Band you apply under:

BAND A

BAND B

BAND C



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Application Form



Section 7:

Supporting documentation (5mins)

This is where you confirm in the application checklist all the supporting materials you are going to upload separate and in addition to your application form.

In this application example the applicant is applying for Band C and has confirmed the the mandatory supporting materials.

As the applicant is also applying for Participant and personal disability access costs, the applicant confirms that they are also uploading this supporting document as it is relevant to the application proposal.

If you do not submit the required **mandatory** supporting material, your application will be deemed ineligible.

Supporting document type	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	Included with my application
CVs of those managing your festival (new festivals only)	Mandatory (If it is a new festival only)	Not required	Not required	
Draft programme of events for your 2026 proposal	Mandatory (If it is a new festival only)	Optional	Optional	
Letters or agreements of support for your proposed 2026 activities (* one of which must be from your local authority)	Optional	Mandatory maximum of 3 letters	Mandatory minimum of 5 letters*	✓
Strategic plan, festival development plan or business plan	Not required	Not required	Mandatory	✓
Animal-welfare statement	If relevant your application	If relevant your application	If relevant your application	
Participant or personal disability access costs - itemised breakdown	If relevant your application	If relevant your application	If relevant your application	✓



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Supporting Materials



Further information can be found in the Festival Investment Scheme guidelines.

Mandatory

CVs of those managing your festival (New festivals only)

BAND A

You are **only required to provide CV's if you are making an application for a new festival**. In order for those assessing your application to gain a better understanding of how your festival will be managed, CVs of those managing the proposed project should accompany your application.

Your CV should highlight any relevant experience of managing, curating or producing festival or event programmes.

CVs should all be placed in one document and uploaded with your other application materials.

Draft programme of events (New festivals only)

If you are proposing a new festival you **must** provide a draft programme as a separate document.

You may wish to consider providing a breakdown of your festival programme timetable, further detail on the artists involved and any curatorial information that you believe supports your application.

Additional programme information should be placed in one document and uploaded with your other application materials.



Table 2

CVs of those managing your festival	MANDATORY FOR NEW FESTIVAL APPLICANTS ONLY You are only required to provide CVs if you are making an application for a new festival . In order for those assessing your application to gain a better understanding of how your festival will be managed, CVs of those managing the proposed project should accompany your application. Your CV should highlight any relevant experience of managing, curating or producing festival or event programmes. CVs should all be placed in one document and uploaded with your other application materials.
Draft programme of events for your 2026 proposal	MANDATORY FOR NEW FESTIVAL APPLICANTS ONLY (OPTIONAL FOR ALL OTHER APPLICANTS) If you are proposing a new festival you must provide a draft programme as a separate document. All other applicants may submit this document; however this is optional No set format is required but applicants are encouraged to keep information clear and concise. You may wish to consider providing a breakdown of your festival programme timetable, further detail on the artists involved and any curatorial information that you believe supports your application. Additional programme information should be placed in one document and uploaded with your other application materials.

If you do not submit the required **mandatory** supporting material, your application will be deemed ineligible.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Supporting Materials



Further information can be found in the Festival Investment Scheme guidelines.

Mandatory

Letters or agreements of support

BAND B

BAND C

NOTE FOR BAND C APPLICANTS ONLY

Please note that **one** of your letters of support **must be** from your local authority to be eligible for support in funding Band C. This can be from any department within the local authority. The letter should outline why the local authority endorses or supports the work of your festival. If the local authority provides in-kind or financial support this should also be included.

What is a letter of support?

A letter of support is a **written** statement made by an individual or organisation in support of your **proposed festival programme**. (This can be in the form of a letter, email or memorandum of understanding (MOU) addressed to the festival and which outlines the detail of the support.) **It should NOT be from the applicant about their own festival.**

The number of letters required with your application in each funding band is outlined in **table 1**. You must ensure that your letters of support are for your 2026 **proposed programme**. We will **not** accept documentation that relates to a **previous** festival project, therefore you should make sure your letters include your proposed festival dates.

In preparing your letters of support, you should consider providing these from a variety of stakeholders that best reflect and demonstrate the festival's range of partnerships.

Letters of support/MOUs should be placed in one document and uploaded with your other application materials.

If you do not submit the required **mandatory** supporting material, your application will be deemed ineligible.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Supporting Materials



Further information can be found in the Festival Investment Scheme guidelines.

Mandatory

Letters or agreements of support

BAND B

BAND C

What is an MOU?

An MOU is a memorandum understanding. It is agreement which outlines the nature of a partnership between two or more parties.

You SHOULD fill out the Details of the Project and also adjust the Operating Principles as necessary, suitable to your project.

NOTE

An MOU template is available to all applicants on the Arts Council Festival Investment Scheme funding page



Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The following general principles describe the proposed working arrangements in relation to the memorandum of understanding.

Parties to the memorandum of understanding

Festival/organisation	Name
	Address

Operating principles

- The two parties agree, in good faith, to work together to ensure that the project/programme is delivered (as per specification above).
- The two parties agree to commit to the specific commitments and above dates for the development and creation of the project/programme.
- The memorandum of understanding is considered by both parties as an agreement that sets out the terms of a proposed working relationship, subject to all monies being secured for the project/programme.

Period of the memorandum of understanding

The memorandum of understanding will operate from the date of signing to the day of the month 20 .

Declaration of agreement

Name of festival organisation	Name of partner group/organisation
Position	Position
Signature (typed signature acceptable)	Signature (typed signature acceptable)
Date	Date

If you do not submit the required **mandatory** supporting material, your application will be deemed ineligible.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Supporting Materials



Further information can be found in the Festival Investment Scheme guidelines.

Mandatory

Festival Development Plan/Strategic Plan **BAND C**

Band C applicants **must provide**: a strategic plan, business plan or festival development plan. The plan should provide a series of operational actions or a roadmap for your organisation that should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It should outline how your festival will be developed and the management, resources and supports required to underpin the successful delivery of this plan.

It should complement and underpin the programme you have proposed in your application.

NOTE

If your organisation has an existing strategic, business or festival development plan, this **must be** uploaded with your application. If the plan is past its first year, the organisation should provide evidence that it has undertaken a review of the plan and updated it accordingly.

Organisations without a strategic, business or festival development plan **should use** the Arts Council's Festival Development Plan Template, which should be completed and uploaded with your application.

If you do not submit the required **mandatory** supporting material, your application will be deemed ineligible.



Festivals Investment Scheme

Strategic Plan/Festival Development Plan Template

Before completing this template, applicants must submit with the Guidelines for Applicants.

The template is suitable for:

ACTIONS

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Audience development strategies result in new audiences for each festival
- Demographic data demonstrates diversity of audiences

AUDIENCE GROWTH, ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY

Attract and grow and more diverse audiences

OUR VISION

To be one of the world's most celebrated arts festivals, pursuing

OUR PURPOSE

OUR VALUES

ORIGINALITY, EXCELLENCE & DRAMATIC INGENUITY

We value creative ambition, virtuosity, and the ability of artists to innovate.

RELEVANCE, RIGOUR & CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

Our Festival seeks to reflect our society through the arts. We fearlessly engage with big ideas and broker connections between artists and the communities we serve.

LEGACY

Adelaide Festival experiences will resonate for a lifetime. They will affect the way our culture grows.

LEADERSHIP, INTEGRITY & COLLABORATION

Our business practices are based on trust, respect and collaboration with our stakeholders; our organisation reflects the rich diversity of our country and the primacy of its First Nations people

SUSTAINABLE

Our actions demonstrate our commitment to social, environmental and economic sustainability.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Supporting Materials



Further information can be found in the Festival Investment Scheme guidelines.



If relevant

These are documents that you **should** upload with your application materials only if they are relevant to your application.

NOTE

If your application requires these materials and they are not provided it may affect your assessment score.

In the case of participant and personal disability access costs, if these documents are **NOT** provided then these costs will **NOT** be considered for support

An animal welfare statement



For applications that will feature animals in proposed activities and/or festival programmes

Participant or personal disability access costs



For applications that request these costs in their application form (Sections 5.1 and 5.5)



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Application Proposal - Making sure my application is eligible



Further information can be found in the Festival Investment Scheme guidelines.

Your application will be deemed **ineligible**, and will not go any further in the application process, if any of the following is true:

1. You miss the application deadline.
2. You do not submit a completed application form through Online Services (an application form attached as a supporting document will not be accepted)
3. You fail to complete all of the sections in the application form relevant to your proposal.
4. You cannot apply as set out in sections **1.3** to **1.5** of the application guidelines
5. You fail to provide all mandatory supporting materials, as set out in section **1.8** of the application guidelines



- Section 1.3 Who can apply?
- Section 1.4 Who is the applicant?
- Section 1.5 Who cannot apply?



Note: in the event that your application is ruled ineligible, it will not be assessed.





10-minute break

The application clinic will resume shortly



Next Steps

Processing of my application

Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Next Steps - Processing your application



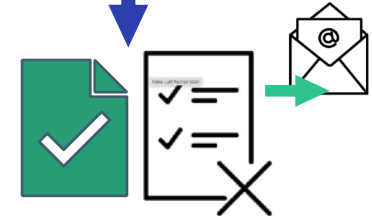
Choosing your application band/
artform area and completing your
application proposal



Submitting your application
through OLS



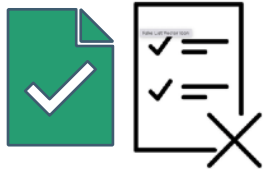
Closing date for applications
- Thursdays 5.30pm



Eligibility Checks - Does it
have all the supporting
materials required?



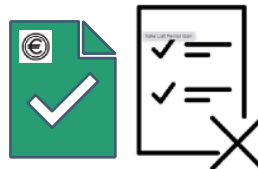
Assessment of applications



Shortlisted or Not Shortlisted for
funding consideration based on score



Executive Recommendations



Funded or Unable to Assist



All applicants notified



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Next Steps - Processing your application



1. After you submit your application, you should receive two emails:

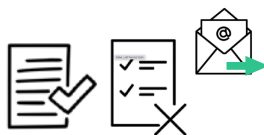
The first acknowledge your application.

The second should will contain your application number

Note: these emails do not mean that your application is eligible for funding.



2. Your application is checked for eligibility. (Slide 41)



3. In some cases, the arts area to which you have applied may not be the best fit for your proposal. In such a case, we will contact you. You will then have a choice to have your application moved.



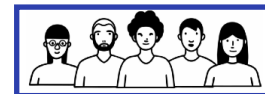
4. Adviser(s) and/or staff make a written assessment of the application, which is then scored by the executive.



5. Those applications which score 60% and above are shortlisted and recommended for funding consideration. Those scoring under 60% are not considered.



6. The executive reviews all shortlisted applications and recommendations, and makes funding decisions. Funding decisions are made in application score order until the available budget is allocated.



7. Funding decisions are communicated in writing to applicants.



Notifications and written assessments of your application are due:

- Mid-September 2025 Round 1
- Mid -February 2026 Round 2

8. Funding decisions are noted by Council.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Next Steps - Assessment of your application



Adviser(s) and/or staff make a written assessment of the application based on the following criteria for the scheme

a) Artistic merit and artform priorities

The assessment of artistic merit focuses on the applicant's previous practice/track record as well as on the nature of the proposed activity, and includes consideration of:

- The quality of the idea and the proposed programme as outlined in the application form
- The artform/arts-practice context in which the activity is proposed
- A demonstration of high artistic quality and vision (artists and programme)
- Support for the development of individual artforms/arts practices and for developing capacity among artists and practitioners
- The ambition and originality demonstrated in the proposal.

Note

Particularly relevant to **sections 2,3** of the application form and supporting materials

Table 3

Artform/arts-practice area	Priority
Circus	• Present artistically ambitious, high-quality proposals that demonstrate excellent skill level in a variety of circus disciplines. • Proposals developed in collaboration with local authorities and/or formal organisations with an established track record in the delivery of arts services and/or artistic programmes (e.g. arts centre, resource organisations, production companies, etc.).
Dance	• Present artistically ambitious dance, across genres, with a focus on high-quality public performances and seek to develop new communities for dance. • Support partnerships, co-production and collaboration across the dance and wider arts sector. • Demonstrate the capacity to contribute to broader artform and audience development of Irish-based and international dance works.
Film	• Provide unique opportunities for the public to access programmes of cultural cinema that would not otherwise be available in their locality or region.
Literature	• Programme contemporary literature events in ambitious and imaginative ways • Focus on developing readership for contemporary literature • Display excellent treatment and remuneration for participating writers and artists • Work with booksellers and/or libraries.
Music	• Festival programme centred on high-quality professional public performances • Appropriately feature Irish music.
Theatre	• Seek to present high quality theatre work for general audiences by professional theatre artists and organisations which: - pushes the boundaries of professional theatre in terms of experimentation and innovation and/or - presents theatre events in off-site and non-conventional spaces and/or - presents professional theatre events for communities that do not have regular access to professional theatre
Traditional Arts	• Demonstrate a strong commitment to presenting and showcasing local and regional artists as part of a wider programme.
Visual Arts	• Clearly show an understanding of how to mediate the visual arts to people with a non-specialist knowledge of the artform • Have a particular commitment to, or focus on, supporting artists' development. For Band C applicants only: • Support commissions focused on communities of place and interest.



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Next Steps - Assessment of your application



Adviser(s) and/or staff make a written assessment of the application based on the following criteria for the scheme



b) Priorities of the award

- Demonstrate **public engagement** by:
 - Evidence of audience-development strategies that provide opportunities for the public to attend arts events and/or to participate in arts activities
 - Providing opportunities for the public to collaborate with artists.
- Demonstrate **festival priorities** by:
 - Producing evidence of a high level of integration with local resources and supports from a diverse range of partners
 - Demonstrating a commitment to collaboration with organisations that support and strengthen the festival's work
 - Showing an understanding of the context/place the festival is being presented in, and evidence of the value and relevance to the immediate community
 - Evidencing an awareness of artists living in the region, and how the festival is working to support their development.
- Demonstrate **equality, diversity and inclusion priorities** by:
 - Showing how equality, diversity and inclusion are included in the organisation's working practices.

Note

Particularly relevant to **sections 2,3,4** of the application form and supporting materials



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Next Steps - Assessment of your application

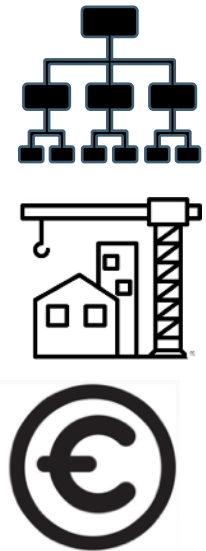


Adviser(s) and/or staff make a written assessment of the application based on the following criteria for the scheme

c) Feasibility

The assessment of feasibility considers the extent to which the applicant demonstrates capacity to deliver the proposed activity. This includes consideration of:

- The proposed timetable or schedule and its management
- The financial information provided
- The track record of the organisation (or its management team if a new organisation)
- The availability of other supports/partners identified in the application
- The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the provision of equitable conditions and remuneration for participating artists.



Note

Particularly relevant to **sections 2,3,5,6** of the application form and supporting materials



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Next Steps - Scoring of your application



Adviser(s) and/or staff make a written assessment of the application based on the following criteria for the scheme

How do scores relate to funding offers?

Scores will play a significant part in the making of funding offers. Funding amounts will reflect the overall budgetary context in which the Arts Council is operating, along with the competitive nature of the scheme.

Note



Applications that score 60% and above are shortlisted and **considered** for funding. Applicants should **not assume** that this will guarantee a funding offer; this depends on **the budgetary and competitive context in each round and in each artform/arts practice area**. Funding is distributed in application score order (per artform/arts practice). In some cases there may not be the available budget to fund all applications that score over the 60% threshold.

Each score offered under each criterion will be multiplied by a weighting to get a rating. The ratings are determined by the relative importance the Arts Council places on each criterion. The final score is expressed as a percentage.

Numerical score	Word value	Explanation
6	Exceptional	The application addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion comprehensively and in an exemplary manner. There are no shortcomings whatsoever. This score is reserved for the very best elements of applications and will be used very sparingly.
5.5		At the top end of 'Excellent'.
5	Excellent	The application addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion convincingly and successfully. It provides all the information and evidence needed, and there are no concerns or areas of weakness.
4.5		At the top end of 'Very good'.
4	Very good	The application addresses the criterion very well. It gives clear information on the evidence needed. Any concerns or areas of weakness are minor.
3.5		At the top end of 'Good'.
3	Good	The application addresses the criterion well, although some improvements could be made. It gives information on nearly all of the evidence needed, although there are some gaps.
2.5		Between 'Sufficient' and 'Good'.

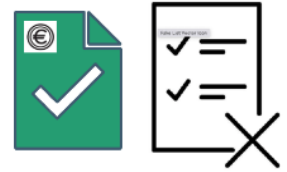
Scoring Matrix Sample

	Percentile	Weighting
Artistic merit and artform priorities	35%	(5.83)
Priorities of the award	45%	(7.5)
Feasibility	20%	(3.33)
Total	100%	



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Next Steps - Outcomes of applications



If your application is eligible for assessment there will be one of two outcomes at the end of the process.

Your application is **successful** and you will be offered a funding amount

All applicants are informed in writing about the outcome of their application.

If your application is successful, you will be emailed a letter of offer detailing the amount of funding you have been awarded along with the terms and conditions of the award and your application assessment. You will also be told how to go about drawing down your award; your application assessment will be sent to you automatically.



Your application is **unsuccessful** and we are unable to assist

If your application is not successful, you will be notified by email and then sent your application assessment.

Eligibility and compliance with application procedures alone **do not** guarantee receipt of an award.

Unsuccessful applicants are not eligible to apply for another Arts Council award to undertake the same activity. If the Arts Council feels that the proposed activity would have been more suited to a different award programme, an exception may be made. In such circumstances you will be informed in writing.





Things to consider

Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Things to consider



Before starting your application

- Gather your materials and have them to hand: application form, reports and evaluations as well as the application guidance
- **Read the guidance thoroughly** - even if you have applied before
- Remember the language guidance: **MUST - SHOULD - MAY**
- If any aspect of the form is confusing or you do not understand it please refer to the Festivals team at the Arts Council
- Remember to **leave plenty of time** - the application form takes about 10-15 hours to complete.

When writing your application

- **Pay attention to the notes/prompts in the application** - they are provided to assist you in filling out the form.
- You are asked to indicate income, expenditure and amount requested at two stages during your application: Online, the application form,. Make sure that the totals are the **same** on both
- Double check you have applied for between **for amounts allowable in the band under which you are applying.**
- That your funding request from the Arts Council is **your expenditure minus your income**

Before submitting your application

- Remember that all application materials **MUST** be uploaded via the Arts Council's Online System (OLS). We will not accept applications outside of OLS. Placeholder documents which are then followed by email or post are not allowed.
- **Double check mandatory support material is included** - do this by checking the guidelines and checklist in the application form

- **Do not** leave any aspect of the **application form blank**. This would render the application ineligible.
- Please **be explicit and use clear language (NOT jargon)**. Your application is being assessed by artform peers and experts who may not know the work of your festival but will understand best practice.

- **Evidence any claims** that you make in the application.
- **Make sure you are consistent** - is what I have said in one section what I have said in another ?



Festival Investment Scheme 2026

Presentation for applicants

Thank you

Festivals Team

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Festivals Head: Karl Wallace