

2021-2024

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explanatory notes

project subsidies

professional arts scheme

**AFK**  
amsterdams  
fonds voor de  
kunst

# Explanatory notes on project subsidies for the Professional Arts scheme



In these explanatory notes to the scheme, we will discuss the different options for the various application categories, provide a more detailed description of the evaluation process and elaborate on the assessment criteria.

## OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE SCHEME

As part of its mission, 'Fantastic art for Amsterdam' ('Fantastische kunst voor alle Amsterdammers'), the AFK wants to invest in delivering exciting, ambitious and meaningful projects in the city and in helping artists with their professional development. This scheme is intended for individual makers and cultural organisations in all art disciplines; for both young talent and organisations with a longer track record. The scheme supports them in the making and showing of their art and in their professional development. Its scope ranges from small, intimate neighbourhood-oriented projects to large, iconic international ventures. Together, they contribute to a diverse, multi-faceted art landscape that reaches an ever increasing group of Amsterdam residents. The AFK uses stipends to support individual programmes by experienced artists focused on development, research and experiment.

## WHAT KIND OF PROJECT IS ELIGIBLE?

Within the scheme, it is possible to submit a subsidy application for:

- Category I: projects requesting funding for up to a maximum amount of €15,000
- Category II: projects requesting funding in excess of €15,000
- Category III: a visual work of art in the public space; the amount of funding requested may not exceed 50% of the total budget, up to a maximum amount of €50,000
- Category IV: a stipend for a fixed amount of €15,000.

Art projects in all disciplines are eligible for this scheme, for example, in the fields of dance, theatre, music, literature and word art, but also fashion, film, photography and visual art. You can apply for a subsidy for creating an artistic work and for presenting or exhibiting art. The principles of artistic content must occupy a central position in these projects. Projects must be carried out by one or more professional artists or by a professional cultural organisation. The result of the project must be made available or accessible to an Amsterdam audience.

A project may consist of several activities, clearly related to each other and with both a beginning and an end. It is not possible to submit an application for an entire annual programme, but it is possible to request subsidy for a series or sequence of related activities. It is also possible, under certain conditions, to apply for a subsidy for repeat performances in Amsterdam. If the AFK has already contributed to the production, it will be necessary to prove that the reprise entails a further development in terms of artistic content or audience reach.

It is also possible to submit an application for a visual artwork in the public space or for a contribution for development, research and experimentation (a stipend).

The stipend allows artists and mediators who have already developed a defined artistic signature and gained work experience to focus on research, experiment and development for a longer period of time (up to a maximum of one year). The funding gives them the freedom to develop artistically outside of delineated public-orientated projects. The development of business or communication skills may also be part of a plan to strengthen the professional practice and visibility of the maker or mediator.

### WHO CAN SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

There are different eligibility requirements for projects in the various categories.

Organisations receiving funding from the AFK based on the 2021-2024 Scheme for Four-year Subsidies, the Two-year Subsidy Scheme for Culture Participation or the 2021-2024 Development Scheme, as well as institutions in the Amsterdam Basic Infrastructure (BIS) scheme as listed in the 2021-2024 Amsterdam Arts and Culture Memorandum, may not submit an application under this scheme.

#### Category I

Applications for funding of an amount up to a maximum of €15,000 for a project (Category I) may only be submitted by a natural person or a legal entity (organisation) working on a not-for-profit basis. This could be an association or a foundation. Therefore, both individuals and cultural organisations may submit an application.

#### Category II

A subsidy application for an amount in excess of €15,000 for a project (Category II) may only be submitted by a legal entity (organisation) working on a not-for-profit basis. This must be an association or a foundation. Individual artists may therefore not apply for this category.

#### Category III

A subsidy application for a visual artwork in the public space may only be submitted by a natural person or the legal entity that has commissioned the work of art. For-profit and not-for-profit legal entities may both apply, as well as private and public legal entities, such as private limited liability companies (BVs), public limited liability companies (NVs), government authorities and city districts. In order to submit an application for a visual artwork in the public space in excess of €10,000, it will be necessary to obtain a positive recommendation for the design from Stadscuratorium Amsterdam (SCA). For projects integrated into existing or new buildings, a positive recommendation from the Municipal Committee for Spatial Quality (formerly the Building Inspectorate) will be sufficient.

#### Category IV

An application for a stipend may only be submitted by individual artists and independent intermediaries (not employed by a cultural organisation) based in Amsterdam. They must have at least 4 years of proven professional work experience, whereby any time spent at an art academy or an academic or postgraduate institution will not be taken into consideration. This will be assessed on the basis of their portfolio and curriculum vitae.

## SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applications can be submitted throughout the year. On the basis of Article 1.5 of the Scheme, the AFK may set a whole or partial subsidy ceiling, that is: the maximum amount of subsidy funds available within a year or a six-month period. If a whole or partial subsidy ceiling is to be set, this will be announced before the start of the period in question. The AFK may also set a subsidy ceiling per category. These amounts will be considered to be whole or partial subsidy ceilings.

No further applications may be submitted once the whole or partial subsidy ceiling has been reached. Submitted applications will subsequently be refused, because the whole or partial subsidy ceiling has been reached and the scheme has been closed. In such cases, an application may be resubmitted when more funds become available.

Subsidy applications must be submitted using the digital form available on the website:  
[www.amsterdamsfondsvoordekunst.nl](http://www.amsterdamsfondsvoordekunst.nl).

### Obligatory sections

Subsidy applications must include the following:

**a. A completed online application form.**

**b. A description of the project for which the subsidy is being requested.**

The description must make clear:

- the project's objective
- the project's principles with regard to artistic content
- where, when, how and with whom the project will be carried out and the intended audience and/or participants.

It is important that these choices are explained and substantiated.

The basis of this description should be a project plan of no more than 15 pages. You are also welcome to support your plan with audio, visual or audio visual material, but please keep the scope limited. For example, you can choose to explain part of your plan in a short film. We would also be happy to receive additional documentation related to the artistic development of the project. Examples of this may include sketches, compositions, scenarios, video and audio material, statements of intention, etc. If relevant to the application, you may also send concise audio, visual or audio-visual material of recent work (no more than two years old).

If applying for a stipend, you must submit a plan of no more than 10 pages. A key element will be the way in which you want to use the freedom that the stipend offers and the artistic development and strengthening of your professional practice and visibility that you thereby aim to achieve. Applications for a stipend must also include a digital portfolio containing (audio/visual) material of your most important work, with the emphasis on the past four years.

**c. A realistic, balanced budget with a financial plan.**

Give an overview of the expected revenues and expenses and provide an explanation for each budget item. Please pay attention to the following:

- Fees for the artists who will be presenting and producing must be included in the budget
- Any amounts requested from other parties for a grant, sponsorship or reimbursement for the same project must also be included, with information on the status of any such application.
- Overhead costs may not exceed 7% of the total budget. By overhead costs, we mean all costs not directly attributable to the primary process of the project, such as office accommodation, administration, ICT and costs for general and business management. If the total overhead costs in any application are in excess of 7%, the reason for this must be explained and justification given as to why this amount is reasonable. If the overheads are too high, we will take this into consideration when determining the amount of subsidy to be granted.
- Only part of the subsidy requested from the AFK can be used for the purchase costs of resources that will exceed the duration or purpose of the project, such as equipment, tools and software licences. The AFK's contribution to purchase costs will not exceed 1/3. Purchase costs must be stated in full in the budget. In the explanation of any cost item you must indicate how much you expect the AFK to contribute. One exception to this is musical instruments: the AFK will not make any contribution towards these.

**d. Curriculum vitae of the most important artistic and/or organisational stakeholders.**

- e. Applications for projects in Category II or for works of art in public spaces (Category III) must also include a communication and marketing plan that clearly shows how you intend to reach the envisaged target groups as well as any special marketing efforts you will make to help raise the visibility of your project within the city.
- f. In addition to the project plan, applications for a work of art in a public space (Category III) requesting funding in excess of €10,000 must also include a positive recommendation for the design from Stadscuratorium Amsterdam (SCA). A positive recommendation from the Spatial Quality Commission is sufficient in the case of a project integrated into a building (new or otherwise).

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**You must ensure that the project plan is convincing and well-prepared so that we can assess it accurately. Please provide all information that you think is important for the evaluation.**

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**Decision period**

Decisions on applications will be made within thirteen weeks of receipt of the completed application. The AFK may extend this decision period by eight weeks. If this is the case, applicants will be notified before the thirteen-week period expires.

## FIRST APPLICATION

If you have not previously received a subsidy from the AFK, you can use 'My First Application', which allows you to explain your application, in person, in a conversation with AFK staff members. You must submit the application in the usual manner, including all the obligatory appendices. If your funding application is rejected, you may apply a second time for the same project in the same way. A project submitted as a 'My First Application' will receive a maximum subsidy of €5,000 from the AFK. The first public presentation of the project must take place at least one month after the interview with the AFK.

Only a limited number of 'My First Application' requests can be considered each month. You will find more information, including dates and times, on [www.afk.nl](http://www.afk.nl). You can also register for a 'My First Application' meeting via the website.

Decisions on a 'My First Application' will be taken within one week of the interview. The AFK may extend this decision period by one week in which case applicants will be notified as such. If a 'My First Application' request is granted, the applicant will receive a 100% advance.

## BEOORDELING VAN DE AANVRAAG

The AFK may submit applications to one or more advisors to seek their advice. The advisor(s) will be asked for their opinion regarding the degree to which an application meets the assessment criteria.

The application and accompanying information are crucial to the assessment. They must create a sense of trust that the planned activities will actually take place. The quality of previous activities undertaken by the applicant may provide an indication of the future, so the applicant's past, i.e. their track record, will therefore also be examined. This will be assessed by means of the AFK's own observations and by those of its advisors (through visits to earlier projects) as well as the results of projects funded by the AFK in the past. Signs of development, whether positive or negative, will be considered insofar as possible.

A positive assessment of one or more separate criteria does not automatically mean that a subsidy will be granted. The overall assessment – justified and supported – is crucial to the decision.

### Basis criteria for Categories I, II and III

#### Artistic importance

This will be assessed on the basis of the following points.

- **Artistic originality:** is the idea stimulating, surprising and/or distinctive and is the artistic interpretation of the idea convincing? This concerns the connection between the artistic principles and the way in which they are expressed in the envisaged work.
- **Artistic significance for the intended audience:** has the applicant built a convincing case explaining what they want the project to achieve in relation to the intended audience? Does the artistic plan reflect this and is it expected to be meaningful for the intended audience?
- **Artistic contribution to the city:** how does the project compare to other similar cultural activities and initiatives in Amsterdam? To what extent does the application make the project's importance for the city convincingly clear and how does the project distinguish itself and add value to the cultural activities available in the city?

### Feasibility

This will be assessed on the basis of the following points.

- **Organisational feasibility:** is the plan realistic and feasible with regard to the manner of working, organisation, expertise and scope? Will there be cooperation with appropriate partners where relevant? Is there a realistic plan for the presentation of the project?
- **Realistic budget and financing plan:** is the estimated budget (expenses and revenues) realistic and appropriate to the plan? Is the budget balanced, well-founded and does it provide a sound enough basis for carrying out the planned activities and reaching the intended audience? Is there an appropriate financing mix?

### Additional criteria for Category II and Category III

#### Importance to the city

This will be assessed on the basis of the following points.

- **Visibility:** has the intended audience reach been clearly formulated and is it appropriate in terms of size and composition? Is the communication and marketing plan realistic and appropriate to reach the intended audience? Will the project and its result be visible in the city other than at the moment of presentation, for example, through special PR and marketing, fringe programming and/or cooperation partners?
- **Geographical spread:** to what extent does the project contribute to the distribution of cultural activities and audience reach in the city? The AFK pays particular attention to the extent to which activities and audience reach are achieved outside the city centre district (Centrum). The feasibility of these intentions also plays a role in the light of, among other things, the applicant's experience and choice of possible cooperation partners.
- **Diversity & Inclusion:** does the project contribute to a diverse and inclusive arts field in an artistic sense (e.g. through the theme, the form, the makers) and/or in terms of audience reach? This involves contributing to the accessibility of the cultural sector and/or the representation of the different backgrounds and stories within the city (as referred to in the Diversity & Inclusion Code). Are the intentions formulated by the applicant realistic and appropriate to the applicant and their experience? A sense of reality may also be demonstrated, for example, by the choice of relevant cooperation partners.

## Criteria for Category IV

### Artistic signature

The artistic signature of the artist or mediator and the quality of his or her previous work (based on the portfolio) will be assessed.

### Contribution to artistic professional practice

The motivation and plan for development, research or experiment will be assessed. Is it clear what the applicant wants to do? Have they formulated a realistic end goal and has the suitability of the envisaged plan been sufficiently substantiated? Is there a convincing connection between the plan and the applicant's broader artistic development? Does the proposed plan contribute to the strengthening of the artist's professional practice and visibility in the long term?

## THE AMOUNT OF THE SUBSIDY

The amount of subsidy requested must be well-justified. When determining the amount of the subsidy, the AFK will take several aspects into consideration.

- There must be a reasonable relationship between the plans and the estimated expenditure. The amount of subsidy requested must also be proportionate to the total budget available to the AFK for this scheme. The AFK stands for a fair distribution of resources among city districts, individual applicants and organisations. The extent to which the applicant plans to work with other Amsterdam organisations, for example, in the area of audience reach, communication and purchasing will also be taken into consideration.
- It is possible that some parts of the plan will be granted a subsidy, while other parts will not.
- When determining the amount, the relationship between the amount of subsidy requested from the AFK and the share of activities and audience reach scheduled to take place in Amsterdam will also be taken into consideration.
- If the total overhead costs in an application exceed 7%, the applicant must explain the reason for this and justify why this amount is reasonable. If the overheads are too high, we will take this into consideration when determining the amount of subsidy to be granted.
- When determining the amount of the subsidy, the fact that the subsidy may only be used to cover part of the purchase cost of resources with a duration and function that will transcend the project will also be taken into consideration. A maximum of 1/3 of these costs may be covered by the awarded subsidy.

## GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL

Listed below are the main reasons for rejecting an application, the so-called grounds for refusal.

Applications must fit within the objectives of the scheme and the activities and applicant must also be eligible for subsidy on the basis of the scheme. Applications must be submitted in good time. An application will be rejected if the first public presentation of the project is to take place within thirteen weeks of receipt of the application, that is: if the activities start within thirteen weeks in the case of a visual artwork in public space or a stipend, or if the first public presentation of 'My First Application' takes place within one month of the date of the interview with the AFK.

The amount of subsidy requested may not be lower than €2,500, nor may it exceed 75% of the total project costs in the case of the first and second categories. In the case of a visual artwork in the public space, this amount is 50%.

Subsidy will be refused if an application for the same project has been submitted previously and rejected. This involves the same activities, so it does not include, for example, an annual festival that submits an application every year.

Applicants are required to provide an account of a previous project that meets the conditions of the AFK. Before a new subsidy is granted, a previous subsidy process must be finally determined according to the specified conditions.

A project must in some way be made publicly available or accessible to an Amsterdam audience; the AFK considers it important for an artist's work to be seen. The AFK allocates financial resources from the city of Amsterdam. This is why it is a condition that at least part of the activities take place in Amsterdam. If online activities or publications are involved, other Amsterdam aspects and involvement will be taken into account, such as the extent to which the project and creative process are embedded in an Amsterdam context, the extent to which Amsterdam makers/artists are involved and the question of whether the content (e.g. theme) is relevant to Amsterdam.

The AFK attaches great value to safe and fair cultural enterprise, good governance and supervision. Applicants are expected to adhere to the [Governance Code Culture](#) and subscribe to the [Fair Practice Code](#). If an applicant does not meet the usual standards of good governance and fair practice for the organisation in question with regard to good management, proper supervision and a safe working environment, this may give cause to reject their application.

#### Interactions with other subsidies from the AFK

If the AFK is already subsidising the costs of an activity, no additional subsidy may be granted. This ground for refusal applies to all types of application. It is the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate that the costs for which the application has been made are not otherwise covered by the AFK.

Subsidies for individual productions, presentation performances, exhibitions and other activities by individual artists which are part of collaborative projects carried out with organisations already receiving a multi-year subsidy within the framework of the 2021-2024 Amsterdam Arts and Culture Memorandum (via the AFK or the Amsterdam Basic Infrastructure) are only possible subject to the following conditions.

- The project application only covers the input and costs of an organisation or artist who is not receiving funding within the framework of the Arts and Culture Memorandum.
- Moreover, these must be costs not already covered by the Arts and Culture Memorandum.
- It is important that the budget makes clear what the contributions and costs are for all partners, and for which costs the applicant is concretely submitting an application to the AFK.
- The applicant must clearly demonstrate that the costs for which the application has been submitted are not otherwise subsidised by the AFK.
- The AFK will not contribute to costs that can reasonably be covered by the four-year or two-year subsidy, such as rent, overhead, staff employed by the collaborative partner as part of the Arts and Culture Memorandum.

- The AFK expects that in the case of collaborative projects with a multi-year supporting organisation, there is also backing and support for the project from this organisation. This may be demonstrated by a reasonable financial contribution from the organisation receiving multiannual support or organisational commitment (best-effort obligation).
- Rental costs can only be included in the costs of the organisation or artist submitting the application if they are offset by audience income (receipts and/performance fees).

The AFK stands for a fair distribution of resources among city districts, individual applicants and organisations. Not contributing more than once to activities and costs that are already being subsidised enables us to better support diversity and cohesion within the cultural activities on offer.

### ADVANCES

The AFK will give an advance payment of 90% of the amount of subsidy awarded. A 100% advance will be granted for applications being handled as a 'My First Application'. Advances will be paid automatically within four weeks of the decision to grant the subsidy. If you do not wish to receive an advance payment immediately after award but would rather request it at a later date, please indicate this in the application form.

### OBLIGATIONS AND FINAL ACCOUNTING

Applicants must notify the AFK of all important changes in relation to the application and award of the subsidy through the My AFK digital platform. This would be the case, for example, if certain activities did not go ahead, if there were changes in the organisation or in the artistic and organisational performers, or if there were significant changes to the financing of the activities.

The subsidy decision may also include obligations to report or supplement specific items. If it later becomes apparent that there have been substantial changes which have not been reported, the AFK may lower the subsidy or withdraw it completely. This is entirely at the risk of the applicant.

Applicants must submit a substantive and a financial account within three months of the end of the project. To help you do this, use the accounting guidelines that are available on the AFK website. The financial accounting should show how the subsidy was used and spent and any significant differences between the accounting and budget should be explained. In this final account, you must demonstrate that the project was carried out in accordance with the application or with the changes accepted by the AFK.

If the total amount of subsidy granted by the AFK for a project is € 25,000 or more, or if the project has a minimum project size of € 125,000, the financial account must also include a compilation report in accordance with the accounting guidelines on the AFK's website.

The AFK will determine the subsidy on the basis of this final account. In principle the amount thus determined will be equal to the amount granted. But if, for example, fewer activities were carried out or the quality was inadequate, the AFK may set the subsidy at a lower level. The AFK will make a decision about the final determination of the subsidy within 13 weeks.

This period may be extended by eight weeks. The applicant will be notified of this. The amount that has not yet been paid will be transferred automatically.

#### **FINAL PROVISIONS**

These explanatory notes must be read in combination with the 2021-2024 Project Subsidies for the Professional Arts Scheme of the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts.

In case of mutual contradictions between the scheme and the explanatory notes, the 2021-2024 Project Subsidies for the Professional Arts Scheme will prevail.

## COLOPHON

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