

**GUIDELINES
WHEN APPLYING
FOR PROJECT
SUBSIDIES FOR THE
PROFESSIONAL ARTS
SCHEME**

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Introduction

These guidelines are intended for artists or cultural organizations planning to submit an application for a project subsidy that falls within the Professional Arts Scheme. The aim of these guidelines is to assist in making an application, and to offer useful tools in working out the details of an application. There is also information about what an application needs to contain and how applications are evaluated.

Applications can be submitted by means of a digital application form found on the website of the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts (AFK). On that form, you will be asked to list the key information regarding your project, programme or development plan. In addition, you must include a number of required documents: a project plan, a budget, a curriculum vitae (CV), and other documents that might reasonably be considered to be relevant.

The project plan - or, in the case of a development budget, the development plan - is, along with the budget, the most important component of your application. In the project plan, you describe as clearly and concretely as possible what you intend to do and why. In the budget, you list the expected expenditures and revenues, and provide explanations for the most important budgetary items. Try to be as specific as possible. In addition, your application should include any other documentation you think might be relevant (including design sketches, compositions, scenarios, video and sound materials, declarations of intent etc.). Brief CVs of the artistic team involved are a required part of your application. In the project plan you must also devote attention to the marketing and communication for the project: the intended target groups and how you hope to reach them. It's also possible to upload an optional, separate marketing and communication plan.

We strongly advise applicants to read and study the information about the Professional Arts Scheme on our website. Explanations are available in the scheme itself and in the explanatory notes, detailing what the AFK expects from applicants and how applications are evaluated. You will also find a description of the types of projects for which you can apply and an explanation of the various assessment criteria.

Contents of an application

In your application, you are free to format your plan and the budget however you choose. The plan for projects, programmes and development budgets must be no longer than 15 pages maximum, including written explanation of the budget.

When applying for a **project or a programme**, the following components are essential:

- a) a description of the activities you want to carry out and the concrete strategy;
- b) the objective of your project or programme;
- c) an explanation of the main artistic principles of the project or programme, and a justification of your choices (with a theatre performance for example, you would describe the various elements such as text, stage direction, design, lighting and sound, and include your motivation);
- d) where, when, how, and with whom you plan to implement the proposed activities;
- e) a description of the project's desired target group and the means of communication that will be used to reach the intended audience and/or intended participants. Please explain your choices;
- f) the amount of subsidy you are applying for from the AFK and why;

- g) a realistic, balanced budget for the project or programme. The budget must contain expenditure specifications and a coverage plan. Include an overview of all the other applications submitted to third parties for subsidies, sponsoring or compensation for the same project. Please include a statement describing the state of affairs with regard to the assessment and/or decision on such applications. The budget must also contain a written explanation of each budgetary item.

Applications for a **development budget** must contain:

- a) a description of the artistic development you are hoping to achieve in relation to your current artistic practice, including a reflection on work you realised previously;
- b) a description of the initial situation and the intended goal on both a practical and artistic level;
- c) a description of the steps needed to attain the desired goal;
- d) a description of the way in which you intend to make your final results public;
- e) insight into your positioning as an artist or mediator (a curator or programmer, for example) in Amsterdam, and the way in which the development process will reinforce your position;
- f) a realistic, balanced budget for the project or programme. The budget will consist of cost specifications and a coverage plan. An overview of all other applications submitted to third parties for subsidies, sponsorship or compensation for the same project must also be included in the coverage plan. Please include a statement describing the state of affairs with regard to the assessment and/or decision on such applications. The budget must also contain a written explanation of each budgetary item. Examples include: materials, research, training, fees paid to third parties, travel and accommodation costs, subsidies, income from sponsors, etc. The applicant may not request an allowance for him or herself, but may include an allowance for time invested. A maximum honorarium of € 1,500 per month can be allowed for this in the budget. In the course of the entire development process, the AFK will contribute a maximum honorarium of € 7,500 as an allowance for the time invested.
- g) a relevant digital portfolio, with an emphasis on the four calendar years prior to the application. The portfolio must include a curriculum vitae, which clearly shows at least four years of professional artistic practice;
- h) income tax returns and tax assessments for the most recent calendar year, providing they do not date from more than two years prior to the application. An income declaration from the Tax and Customs Administration would also be sufficient.

Applications are reviewed on the basis of the following **criteria**:

- artistic quality
- commercial quality
- audience reach
- importance to the city of Amsterdam

The questions listed below are to help you understand the criteria the AFK uses when evaluating an application. You can use this checklist when formulating your application.

Questions relating to artistic quality

- what is the objective of your **project or programme**? How does the project fit within your own artistic development or that of your organization to date?
- who (or which other artists) will be involved in the project or programme, why, and what will their role be? How will they be involved?

- will there be a collaboration in the area of artistic content? If so, why, and what will this contribute to your project? Describe the collaboration concretely. What is the status of the collaboration? Have commitments been made? If so, please include these (declarations of intent), with your application.
- how does this project or programme distinguish itself from (the work of) other makers or projects within this genre or this discipline?
- what is your individual artistic view of the subject matter? Can you justify it?
- concretely describe the final results of the project or programme. What response are you hoping to generate in the audience?

In the case of an application for a **development budget**:

- what is the artistic goal you would like to achieve with your development? How does this relate to the work you've done during the previous four years? Why is the proposed development necessary?
- who (or which other artists) will be involved in the intended development, and what will their role be? How will they be involved?
- how does the projected development distinguish itself from (the work of) other makers within the genre or discipline?
- during the period of the development budget, to what extent are you hoping to achieve an artistic boost in quality, or to achieve development in craftsmanship in your own work, and how is that different from the way you currently produce work (or work with new materials)?
- what are the ramifications of the projected development for audiences?

Questions regarding commercial quality:

- do you have experience implementing projects of this capacity and scope?
- what will be the practical and organisational approach to the project during its running time? Will the project be done in phases? Describe the project team: what are their working methods, and how does this relate to your current work or the structural management of your organisation?
- will you collaborate with other organisations on a commercial level? If so, why, and how will this add to your project? What is the concrete nature of this collaboration and what is its status? If commitments have been made, please include these (declarations of intent) with your application;
- which other people or organisations are important to the success of the project, and how are you planning to approach them?
- does your organisation comply with the Culture Governance Code? If so, how?
- list the activities you plan to undertake to generate (your own and other) revenue, Which sources of revenue are you planning to tap into?
- what will you do if revenues fall short of expectations?
- provide a detailed explanation of the budget you are submitting, including possible contributions from third parties and financial commitments from potential collaboration partners. Explain both the expenses and the revenues. Also clearly indicate what your own financial contribution to the project will be. Explain and motivate this in the 'own income' (minimum 25%) portion of the budget. If necessary, provide clarification for how the figures on the application form correspond with your own budget;
- if the communication costs exceed the expected revenues from ticket sales, and/or amount to more than 15% of the total expenses, please explain.
- an explanation is also required if the overhead costs exceed 5% of the total costs. For the purposes of the AFK, 'overhead' consists of all costs that are not directly related to the primary process of the project, programme or development plan, such as office space, administration, IT, and general and business management. Explain to the AFK why you think the requested amount is reasonable.

Questions regarding audience reach:

- what are your objectives in the area of audience reach? For example: do you hope to reach new audiences, would you like to strengthen audience ties to your organisation, are you hoping to sell more tickets, etc.? Formulate these aims in a way that is action-oriented, realistic and can be measured.
- which target groups are you hoping to reach with this project? Why have you chosen these target groups? How does the projected audience compare with the audience for projects your organisation has carried out in the past?
- which factors will influence your audience reach? Where do you see opportunities? Identify possible threats.
- how are you planning to approach your projected target groups? Will your approach be tailored to suit different target groups? If so, please indicate which marketing resources you will use per target group and why;
- will you work with other organisations to reach your audience? If so, why, and what will this contribute to your project? What is the specific nature of the collaboration and what is its status? If commitments have been made, please include these (declarations of intent) with your application;
- what is your strategy regarding admission prices?
- what role does your choice of location play in this project or programme?
- which promotional channels (for example social media, radio, TV, direct mail, Internet, etc.) will you use to reach your target groups? Back this up with as much quantitative data as possible, including the number of followers or the size of your mailing list.
- are you hoping to use specific marketing or programming to reach a culturally diverse audience within the city (as defined in the Cultural Diversity Code)? If so, how?
- in the case of a **development plan**, please state how the final results of the process will be made public and to what extent this will be feasible and appropriate to the development issue.

Questions regarding the importance to the city of Amsterdam

- where (in which city district) will the performance or presentation of your project take place? What led you to choose that location, or those locations?
- do you have experience with that location (or those locations)?
- how does the project or programme compare with other (similar) offerings and initiatives in the city of Amsterdam? How does this project distinguish itself or otherwise add value?
- what is the importance of your project or programme to the city of Amsterdam?
- if your project or programme is primarily limited to online activities and scope:
 - to what extent is the project and/or its process of creation embedded within an Amsterdam context?
 - to what extent are Amsterdam's makers/artists involved in the project?
 - is there a substantive (for example thematic) Amsterdam connection?
- in the case of a **development plan**, please explain how your proposed development will contribute to improving your positioning as an artist or mediator within Amsterdam.

PLEASE NOTE: *Some of the AFK's regulations, as well as some general information about the AFK, have been made available in English, and an application may be submitted in English. However, all correspondence regarding the application process will be conducted in Dutch. In the event of any ambiguities or discrepancies between the Dutch and English versions, the Dutch text shall prevail.*

Colophon

Guidelines when applying for project subsidies for the professional arts scheme is published by the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts (AFK).

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