

INNOVATE FUND: FAQ

LEAD APPLICANT: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Organisation definition: How do you define an organisation?

An entity with more than one individual involved that has a constitution or articles of association and a bank account under its name.

2. Organisation type and status: what are the selection criteria for organisations to apply?

Any organisation that has a constitution / articles of association and a bank account under the organisation's name whose primary focus is cultural activity and / or community engagement that wishes to develop and introduce a new programme of activity to their existing portfolio that would align with the Visitor Levy Scheme's and Citywide Culture Strategy's Aims is invited to apply is eligible to apply.

Any annual festivals or events considering the funding opportunity must outline a new direction or development that would build on their existing experience, be it interdisciplinary work (co-design/co-production), a new audience engagement model or medium, a new avenue for community-based or commercial activity.

Any activity already funded by the Third Party Grants is not eligible for funding. Only new / additional developments that introduce an additionality to the seasonal / regular provision can be considered.

3. Consortia: Can a consortium proposal cover several independent cultural buildings/hubs under one lead applicant?

Yes, the lead applicant would have to have a constitution / articles of association and a bank account under the organisation's name. A memorandum of understanding between the partnering organisations and /or a model outlined in the Model of Governance section of the application would provide more understanding and clarity to the panel when assessing the proposal from the joint venture.

4. Organisation's registration postcode: Please confirm whether "cultural organisations in Edinburgh" means the applicant must have its registered office in Edinburgh, or whether an organisation operating substantially in Edinburgh qualifies?

The activity must take place within the Edinburgh Council area; however, the organisation can be registered outwith Edinburgh. It must have a UK registration postcode.

5. Organisation's core activity: Would non-cultural organisations/charities be eligible if the project they were seeking funding for was specifically for a cultural activity?

Yes, the proposed cultural activity must align with the Visitor Levy Scheme's and Citywide Culture Strategy's Aims and demonstrates relevant KPIs.

6. Cultural organisations: Is there a definition of what is deemed a 'cultural organisation'?

A cultural organisation is an entity whose primary mission is to preserve, develop, or promote arts, heritage, the sciences, or humanities within a community.

7. Registration status: Will you accept applications from Unincorporated Associations, as long as they have all the supplementary documents required?

Yes, if they have a constitution / articles of association and a bank account under the organisation's name

8. Suppliers: Can a supplier be the lead for a bid done with a cultural partner?

Yes, if they present a new activity not a duplication of their existing portfolio for which they are contracted as a supplier that provides specific goods, materials, or services to the Council per their agreement.

9. Strategic Partners / Funded Organisations: Are Strategic Partners or other currently funded organisations eligible to apply?

Yes, however, their funded activities are not eligible for additional funding from the Innovate Fund. Their proposals must outline the additionality to their existing offer.

10. Annual events/festivals: is a one-off enhanced programme of activity linked to a specific edition of a festival which is long-standing eligible for funding? The festival runs every year, but the organisation is applying for activity for a programme of activity which is additional to what would usually be delivered but still takes place as part of the festival.

Any event or festival entity can apply funding to support their new direction in programming or delivery. The project outline must demonstrate how new or innovative the proposed activity is in the very context of the event / festival delivery. If the event/festival is already funded by the Council, none of the subsidised costs can be duplicated.

11. Multiple submissions: can one organisation submit multiple proposals?

Yes, as long as they outline distinct ideas and development opportunities.

ACTIVITY TYPE

1. Project eligibility: Can you please be more specific on acceptance criteria for projects?

We are looking for projects that outline a new direction or development in the organisation's practice, be it interdisciplinary work (co-design/co-production), a new audience engagement model or medium, a new avenue for community-based or commercial activity that aligns with the selected Visitor Levy Scheme's and Citywide Culture Strategy's Aims and demonstrates relevant KPIs.

2. Additionality: We are already funded through local festival fund - how will you decide if the programme is additional to that?

The applicant must present their rationale for the activity and demonstrate the new direction or development that aligns with the Visitor Levy Scheme and the Citywide Culture Strategy 2023-2030. Most of the currently funded projects have only been aligned with the Strategy, the proposals for the Innovate Fund support consideration must reference the Visitor Levy Scheme's Aims which offer a new opportunity to build on existing provision.

3. Project development: Would it be possible to apply for an exhibition as part of 80th anniversary of festivals in June 2027; the project has not begun but we have invited the artist already - would that be eligible?

Yes, any idea presented for consideration will be rooted or build on the existing activity, hence early developments and conversations are key to meaningful proposals but only the costs to be incurred after 18 December 2026 can be considered.

4. Continued activity: Do we have to show how we will sustain this work in the longer term or can it be a one off?

It could be a one-off activity; however, the panel would prefer to understand the learning and / or the impact it might have on the organisation(s) and Edinburgh's cultural scene.

5. Ineligible activities: Can you specify what projects will not be considered?

Capital projects, existing projects, core business, regular activity. Any new developments that offer additionality to the regular activity can be considered.

6. Group activities: Could you confirm if it is ok to run a group and then an event or does this just have to be an event?

Any cultural activity or provision is eligible for funding; the fund is not only open to event / festival proposals. The outlined project idea must align with the Visitor Levy Scheme and Culture Citywide Strategy 2023-2030

7. Strategic Partners: How will this funding opportunity fit with any updated cultural partners agreements beyond 2027 as the fund timelines might overlap?

This fund is for short-term projects that offer and additionality to regular provision. Any future potential Strategic Partnership Agreements would need to build on this activity delivery stage.

8. Project business model: How would you specify the project business model?

The proposals must be specific with clear measurable outputs, cultural provision, or outcomes delivered within a fixed-term period. They must list key resources, tasks, and partners required to complete the project. Risks related to timely project delivery and completion must be identified. Any staff costs must be project-based.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Application deadline: Please consider that from time of presentation to submission deadline is less than 25 days which is not normal business practice, so is it possible to extend the deadline?

We do appreciate the short-term nature of this funding opportunity. The awards must be approved by the Culture and Communities Committee on 17 December 2026, hence this is the latest deadline possible considering the assessment period and reporting with the Committee required for processing. The extension is not possible.

2. Copyright: Is the project submission protected with copyright?

All submissions are confidential and the panel members are bound by the confidentiality agreement when they accept the terms of engagement in the assessment process. Short project descriptions of recommended proposals will be shared with the Culture and Communities Committee and might be discussed at the public meeting.

3. Future Fund editions: Is this the only round for Innovate that covers 2 years or will there be another round next year?

This is the only round of the Innovate Fund approved by the Culture and Communities Committee so far.

4. Application form: Can you please share the PDF and WORD formats of the application form?

Yes, the alternative formats are available under the RELATED DOCUMENTS sections on the application form portal. Please note that only the applications submitted via the online form will be considered. The PDF and WORD versions are made available for viewing and copy drafting purposes.

5. Mistakes in submitted proposals: Can we resubmit our proposals if we have noticed mistakes or uploaded wrong attachments?

Yes, you can resubmit your proposal with corrected sections or correct attachments. The resubmission must be completed before the fund deadline. Please notify us by email at culturaldevelopment@edinburgh.gov.uk of the final version of your submission. The version with incorrect information will be deleted.

BUDGET AND PROJECT SCOPE

1. Fund Budget: What is the total fund budget?

The total fund allocation approved the Culture and Communities Committee is £2.66m towards activities starting from 18 December 2026.

2. Budget allocation period: What are the starting and finish dates for project delivery and budget allocation period?

The activity budget must include costs allocations between 18 December 2026 and 31 March 2028. However, if some element of the activity is scheduled beyond 31 March 2028, it is permitted to extend the delivery period until 31 December 2028 to allow for data collection, feedback analysis, and/ or delivery of bi-annual events / festivals / exchange

programmes as well as visitor or resident cultural engagements aligned with other significant cultural activities / anniversaries or heritage events.

3. No award brackets: What are recommended project award levels?

The guidelines do not stipulate the award levels, however, given the interest in the Fund and opportunity to resource many organisations and projects, the suggested award levels fall between £20k and £100k. Project with larger budgets will also be considered. Please note that not all successful project will receive the total requested support hence it is advised to provide as much detail in the cost section as possible to allow for potential reductions that will not jeopardise the project delivery.

4. Existing budget: What do you mean by existing budget? If the application is centred around a development activity that will enhance an existing project, do you require all the financial information about that project, even if it's been running for two years? Or do we provide the budget breakdown for the new activity only?

The application budget should only include costs related to the new main project activity as requested from the Innovate Fund. Larger budgets with multiple costs might confuse and complicate the assessment process. The simpler and clearer the budget, the better. The budget template allows for including other contributions and in-kind support available or pending at the submission stage.

5. Ineligible costs: What do you mean by capped management costs?

Any additional staffing or training costs related to the new development or activity are permitted. No permanent posts costs are permitted given the short-term nature of the resource.

6. Match-funding: What are your expectations regarding partnership funding/contributions? Will there be a % of budget?

There is no expectation from the applicant to provide additional funds or in-kind support. However, if it is possible, it would evidence greater commitment to the delivery of the proposed activity from partnering organisations.

7. External suppliers: Has the applicant the right to select suppliers to execute projects?

Yes, the organisation independently of the Council delivers the project. It is important to bear in mind that with any funding agreement signed with the Council, all fair work requirements and conditions apply to all grantees and their suppliers.

8. Eligible costs: Is equipment for programme delivery eligible?

Yes, if used on a regular basis. Otherwise, hire is preferred.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

1. Grant conditions: what documents must be submitted with the application form?

Please note that all applicants must provide information regarding your company status, financial records, including specifying reserves; and current business plan as well as commitment to Equalities, Sustainability and Fair Work principles.

As part of your application submission, you are requested to upload as Please upload:

- the organisation's Articles of Association / Constitution
- the organisation's most recent annual independently examined/audited accounts
- the organisation's most recent Business Plan
- the organisation's most recent Diversity and Inclusion Policy/Action Plan
- the organisation's Fair Work policy or an outline of your commitment to Fair Work practices
- the organisation's Environmental Policy / outline of reducing environmental impacts

You are also requested to provide information on the total value of projected reserves held by your organisation for financial year 2025/26. Please include both restricted and unrestricted reserves with supporting information on the purpose of restricted reserves.

Please note that the information is only viewed by the Council officers to allow for assessing your organisation's eligibility for application consideration but is not shared with the panel.

2. Business Plan: Is the business plan to be uploaded for the project or for the organisation applying?

Either short- or long-term business plans for the organisation are requested. You are not required to submit a business plan for the project itself.

3. Business Plan Period: We have an existing business plan that covers 2025 to 2028. Do we need an updated version as things have changed in that time period? Does the proposed activity for this fund have to be included in a business plan?

No, only the existing business plans signed off by the organisation are required. As the submission does not guarantee funding, the project proposal does not have to be featured in the existing business plan.

FURTHER INFORMATION / QUESTIONS

1. Information Sessions: Will information sessions be recorded?

The sessions are not recorded but the FAQ slides are shared after the sessions with the participants and uploaded to the application portal.

2. 1:1 Support: Will 1:1 support be offered to allow for discussing project proposals?

Yes, 1:1 Support Sessions can be booked at <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/edinburghs-culture-wellbeing-economy-service-26848139563> or by contacting culturaldevelopment@edinburgh.gov.uk.

The 1:1 Support Sessions will be offered between 19 and 28 October on a first come first serve basis.