

Funding Guidelines 2023/24

Updated: October 2023

This document aims to tell you about our aim, values and funding criteria so you can decide whether you and your work are eligible for a grant. Please do read all the information within these guidelines including the overarching criteria, as well as the category-specific criteria.

If you would like to make an application, please check [our website](#) for further information about the grants we make and how to apply. If you have any additional queries, please feel free to contact a member of the team.

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1. Our aim, values and statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Our aim

We aim to advance the wellbeing of people, society and the natural world. In our grantmaking this means funding work of national significance in the arts, environment and social action. We believe these areas can make an important contribution to wellbeing.

Our values

Relationships are important to us across every aspect of our grantmaking, and in the ways in which we work with others. Our values guide and reflect how we work. We are a **responsive** funder, listening and responding to what applicants and our wider stakeholder network judge is important.

We have well developed and regularly reviewed funding guidelines, enabling us to be **discerning** in our decisions about whom and what to support.

We value all our stakeholder relationships, including organisations we fund and those applying to us, and seek to have a **personal touch**. Our Trustees are involved at every stage of an application, and we always meet an applicant before a grant is made.

We prefer to be **connected** and are in regular contact with relevant colleagues and partners in the charitable and investing worlds. We also like to keep in touch with organisations we fund, convening and linking with them and others from time to time.

We are willing to be **flexible** and may venture outside our funding criteria or our usual ways of working, if we believe a different approach would be more effective.

Our statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

We believe that principles of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) must guide all that we do, which can be summarised as: our recruitment, retention and progression of staff and Trustees; the management of our underlying endowment; our grantmaking; our internal and external communications; and our analysis of the origin of our wealth through our History Project.

We recognise that the failure to prioritise and improve DEI practices within institutional philanthropy and the wider charity and philanthropic sectors has led to the inequitable distribution of funding. We are committed to diverse, equitable and inclusive practices throughout our grantmaking, and are supported to consider how to do this through our own internal learning and reflection and external initiatives like the Foundation Practice Rating and the DEI Data Standard (which includes a form that we ask organisations to complete when they apply), as well as the learning shared by organisations like the Association of Charitable Foundations and IVAR. Our DEI Accountability Plan is the joint responsibility of the Director and the Board of Trustees (which includes a lead Trustee on DEI) and is under continuous review, with the Board asked to approve the next phase of our work at least once a year. The Plan aims to deliver greater equity and improved funding practices through developing and embedding a shared organisation-wide understanding of DEI and applying this in all our work. You can read our DEI Policy in full on our website [here](#).

2. Criteria that apply to all our funding

We receive many more applications than we can support, so we have to be selective. In 2022/23, we received 357 applications of which 263 were eligible. 23% of the eligible applications were taken to second stage. Of the 61 applicants invited to submit a full proposal 13 were declined, representing a success rate of 79% at second stage. We look for work that has a high impact and achieves positive change or long-lasting benefits. This may include tried and tested approaches as well as new ways of working.

We ask that organisations applying to us meet the following two criteria, which apply to all applications within each of our three areas of interest:

1 Organisational size and form

We prioritise UK-registered charities with an income between £100,000 and £10m. This focus allows us to use our capacity and resources by supporting organisations that are established and experienced in the work they undertake. If your income is greater than this, we will only consider a grant if you are uniquely placed to help meet our funding objectives. We call this the '**only they can do it**' test (see our FAQs for more detail). If your income is lower than this, then we would expect to see clear evidence that your organisation has managed a turnover of £100,000 previously or is on track to do so soon. Furthermore, if your organisation is at the lower end of our turnover range, then we ask that you consider your request to us as a reasonable proportion of your overall turnover.

2 National significance

We want our funds to make a difference, with as wide an impact as possible, to organisations that are nationally significant. This may involve creating art of the highest quality; working across a wide geographical area; or sharing and expanding successful initiatives. We also recognise it may be necessary to change the system, and that by influencing policy, campaigning or adopting other approaches more far-reaching and longer-term benefits are possible.

National significance may look different in each of our categories:

- *Arts* – the creation of new work in itself has the potential to create a national or international legacy to inspire others. Using excellence as a key criterion is designed to strengthen and widen impact, thus demonstrating UK-wide significance. Partnerships, whether cross-art form, cross-sector or geographical, may also enhance this significance, and touring and digital output may contribute to a national footprint.
- *Environment* – certain species, habitats and/or ecosystems may have national significance due to their relative scarcity and/or the benefits ('ecosystem services') they provide to people. Some organisations may occupy a nationally significant niche because few other organisations cover the thematic area they specialise on. Initiatives which have national reach or reach within the countries that make up the UK, may also be nationally significant. Furthermore, more locally based initiatives which have clear potential for replicability or are scalable to country level may also be considered to be nationally significant. We also consider the biodiversity of the UK Overseas Territories to be of national and/or international importance.

- *Social Action* – we look to support organisations whose work is rooted in practical experience, often in more than one locality, and is nationally significant because their work can be applied at an England, Scotland, Wales and/or Northern Ireland level.

More information about our approach to funding work in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is in the FAQ section, later in this document.

What we look for in an application:

- *Effectiveness and impact* – this could mean a good understanding of the needs being met and how best to tackle them; awareness of how your work adds value and relates to and complements the work of others; effective systems to monitor and review progress; a culture of learning, reflection and improvement; and being alert to opportunities to widen impact.
- *Strong governance and management* – a diverse and representative organisation with a well-qualified and engaged board and strong and inspiring leadership; a thorough understanding and oversight of finances across the Board and leadership team; and awareness of the organisation’s strengths and weaknesses.
- *Collaborative* – this could mean organisations that are well connected, understand how they fit within their world, and work well with others relevant to the work being done.

Core funding has long been our signature and preference, but we can and do on occasion make grants for projects or programmes where the applicant requests this for their own operational reasons, or are over our £10m threshold. Core funding is funding which goes towards the core costs of delivering an organisation’s work. These costs could include:

- staff salaries, training and expenses
- day-to-day running costs and operations
- monitoring and evaluation
- communications and digital innovation.

If most or all of the activity that your organisation undertakes fits with the relevant category guidelines, you can apply for unrestricted core funding. However, if aspects of what you do are relevant to our categories, then the funding request should be demonstrably directed to the work relevant to the category in question. All applicants should demonstrate a funding need and are not expected to hold excessive free reserves, i.e. unspent, unrestricted or designated funds, unless there is a clear Board approved reason for doing so. We expect applicants to have a reserves policy in place that is being followed.

3. Our categories

ARTS: Creators and Curators

Our aim

We believe arts and culture have the potential to enrich and transform lives, and we recognise its inherent value and unique effects. We will fund organisations that nurture, incubate and commission those people who make and curate work.

What we fund

We concentrate our Arts funding under two separate headings:

1. **Creators in the performing arts** – we focus on the creation of the highest quality, nationally significant work, by funding organisations which collaborate with, commission or otherwise support artists to create new or reimagined work. We prioritise applicants from outside the capital, but do consider those based in London where the proposal would bring significant benefits elsewhere. *(Organisations can apply at any time under this heading.)*
2. **Curators in museums and galleries** – we aim to strengthen those institutions that focus on making use of curatorial skills to attract a wider public. We prioritise applicants from outside the capital, but do consider those based in London where the proposal would bring significant benefits elsewhere. *(This is an annual programme with its own funding guidelines and decision-making process; please see [our website](#) for the latest information.)*

What we are looking for in the performing arts:

Organisations that do some of the following:

- organisations with new or original work at their heart
- track record of producing work that is engaging, well-received and of a high quality, which may include organisations that may be considered leaders within their art form
- exciting, fresh and imaginative ideas and models of working
- regional work that is valued and recognised nationally (foremost) and internationally
- integration of emerging talent and artist development into the artistic programme of work (i.e. developing an individual is not the organisation's main or sole focus)
- an understanding of actual and potential audiences and how the artistic plans relate to them.

ENVIRONMENT: People and Planet

Our aim

We believe that a healthy environment is essential to the wellbeing and resilience of people and nature. Our aim is to achieve greater harmony between people and nature, through the protection, restoration and sustainable use of the natural world. We are interested in organisations that understand the interdependence of people and nature and apply this in their thinking and practice. Often, it is the system that has to change, so we will also support those working to influence governments, businesses, financial and economic systems, and civil society through policy, advocacy and campaigning work.

What we fund:

We concentrate our Environment funding under two main headings:

1. ***The Ocean*** – protection, restoration and sustainable use of the ocean, through more and effectively and equitably managed protected areas; ocean recovery; engaging coastal communities; reducing overfishing and addressing other harmful effects of human activity on, and in the ocean, such as pollution.
2. ***Land and fresh waters*** – building healthier ecosystems in urban or rural environments, through effective and sustainable management including implementing evidence-based interventions conservation and restoration; connecting fragmented habitats; and landscape-scale work to protect and restore places of special significance. We will also support work to reduce or prevent the damaging impacts of human activities, particularly climate change, and air, land and water pollution from chemicals and other pollutants.

Our focus is on the UK and UK waters. However, we are also keen to support land and marine-based work in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs). For work in the UKOTs, we welcome applications from UK-charities working in partnership with local Territory-based NGOs and from charities based in the UKOTs. UKOTs-based charities can apply either directly or through a charity conduit in the UK. For more details on this please see the FAQs, specifically the question: ‘Do you make grants overseas?’.

What we are looking for:

Organisations that do some of the following:

- seek to improve the natural environment
- understand both the significance of habitats for human wellbeing, as well as the impact of people on nature
- look for sustainable solutions by ensuring that the livelihoods and economic needs of local communities are integrated into their thinking and strategy
- work collaboratively
- seek to take an-evidence-based approach
- tackle underlying causes as well as symptoms.

SOCIAL ACTION: Championing Change

Our aim

We aim to help create an inclusive society where all can thrive, by supporting organisations which work to create positive changes at a systems-wide level benefitting wider society.

We believe it is people working together who create change. We are interested in organisations with a track record that tackle divisions and inequity, and who bring together individuals, community organisations and others, including national bodies, to influence government and the agencies that shape our lives.

What we fund

We want to support those with ambition to achieve positive change at scale while also creating benefits for those involved. We will therefore concentrate our funding in pursuit of a thriving society on work which does **both** of the following:

1. ***Actively involves those with personal experience of the issue tackled*** – reflecting our belief that those with direct personal experience of the issue/s understand them best and should have the agency and support to use their expertise, understanding and insights to drive forward the organisation's work. We want them to be able to do this in a supportive environment that is committed to their success. We do not expect disclosures of an individual's personal experience in applications, if this information is not already publicly known or available. We also value the importance of the expertise and insight of those that work alongside individuals and communities with personal experience.
and
2. ***Improves systems through policy, advocacy and campaigning*** – by influencing change and progress on the issues that an organisation is seeking to tackle and securing the rights that are due to the individuals it supports. This could include: collecting and using evidence; connecting people and the establishment; creating opportunities for contact, dialogue and meaningful engagement; or designing and imagining effective strategies and tactics for influencing; and using these approaches to advocate or campaign for improving policies, practices and systems.

We expect a variety of individuals and communities experiencing a range of inequities and discrimination to benefit from our funding. Given this broad canvas, we prioritise work which tackles the greatest barriers created by divisions and inequity. We look to fund work that is explicitly focused on the widest possible benefit across different systems, rather than service delivery.

What we are looking for

Organisations that:

- are rooted in practical experience alongside their policy work
- understand the need to build people's confidence and skills so they are ready to engage with others
- value, promote and learn from the experience of those they support
- are engaging with the unpopular or difficult cause
- seek to tackle causes as well as symptoms.

4. What we do not fund

We do **not** consider applications from organisations that:

- have applied unsuccessfully within the previous 12 months (based on the date the application was submitted)
- focus on a single medical area, such as an individual disease, organ or condition
- are hospitals, hospices, schools, colleges or universities, unless the application is from a leading university specialist unit. More information is in the next section (FAQs).

Grants are **not** made to or for any of the following purposes:

- individuals, including student grants or bursaries
- general and round-robin appeals
- capital developments and individual items of equipment
- promotion of religion or places of worship
- arts organisations and projects whose main focus is supporting and developing an individual, rather than when new work is part of an artistic programme
- learning and participation in the arts, where this is the primary focus of the application
- leisure or individual holiday schemes
- sport, where this is the core of the organisation's activities
- education, such as initiatives linked to the curriculum, arts or environmental educational projects
- animal welfare, captive breeding and/or animal rescue centres as the main purpose of the work
- medical research or treatment, including drug and alcohol rehabilitation services
- work based in prisons that should receive statutory funding and does not pursue wider systems change
- one-off campaigns
- one-off events, such as conferences, trips, seminars, master classes, summer schools, single commissions or productions
- onward distribution of our funds as grants to other organisations, unless we have explicitly agreed to join a funder collaboration where this will happen.

5. Frequently asked questions

Will you support work that takes place in a single UK country?

We fund organisations from any part of the UK whose work has impact across the UK.

Work based in individual countries may be funded where:

- The work is of UK-wide significance – for example, Scotland has the most substantial marine environment in the UK, or because the work is so exemplary or pioneering that it will be of special interest and relevance elsewhere in the UK; **or**
- The work covers more than one UK country – which could be a single organisation working across borders or a partnership of organisations in different countries; for example, an activity in Wales and NI would qualify; **or**
- The organisation is working across England (due to it having the highest proportion of the UK's population).

Do you make grants overseas?

Our Environment category provides grants for work in the UK Overseas Territories, and for marine projects outside UK waters by UK charities.

For work in the UK Overseas Territories, we fund UK-based charities working in the UKOTs, and we are also happy to accept direct applications from Territory-registered charities, including through UK-based conduits. We aim to take a nuanced approach and distinguish between Territories based on their respective charity governance systems.

In practice this means the following:

- NGOs registered in Territories with UK-modelled charity governance systems (**Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Gibraltar, and St Helena**) will be able to apply directly.
- Charities registered in Territories which have non-profit oversight systems that are primarily finance-focussed (**Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Turks & Caicos**) will also be considered for direct funding. However, to ensure an extra level of compliance, NGOs from these Territories will be required to show evidence that they have been successfully accepted as the lead organisation on a UK Government Darwin Plus project grant.
- Given the minimal local charity governance we will not accept direct funding requests from NGOs which are registered solely in the **Falkland Islands** and will require applications to be made via a UK-registered charity.

If your Territory is not listed, or if you have any queries regarding the most appropriate application mechanism, please feel free to contact a member of the Grants Team for advice.

The Crown Dependencies of the Bailiwicks of Jersey and Guernsey which make up Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man are not part of the United Kingdom. Organisations registered in the Crown Dependencies are therefore not eligible.

When do you fund core costs and when do you prefer to fund a project?

As a responsive funder, we listen to what you judge is important. Our main interest is in supporting organisations whose work matches our funding priorities. We believe that core

funding is usually the most valuable contribution we can make. If you think a project grant would be best, you can apply for that instead.

We are aware that a modest core grant will have a limited impact on the finances of larger organisations. If your turnover is close to or over £10m a year, it may be better to apply for a project grant.

Does an application have to fit more than one of your categories?

No. If you are doing work which fits more than one of our categories, then your application should demonstrate how you are a good match with the criteria of one category primarily, and make this the focus of your application.

Furthermore, an individual application or grant does not have to relate to all three elements of our aim – relating to people, society and the natural world. An environment grant, for example, might focus on a particular habitat, with the individual and social benefits only becoming evident indirectly or in the longer term.

What is the ‘only they can do it’ test?

This test only applies to organisations with a turnover of over £10m – i.e. above our upper limit, as we prefer to fund organisations with a turnover between £100k and £10m. Organisations must demonstrate the way(s) in which you are uniquely placed to help meet our funding objectives.

What kind of artforms do you fund under your ‘Creators in the Performing Arts’ category?

We tend to fund organisations working in dance, music, opera and theatre that are directly involved in creating new or re-imagined work, rather than working through partner venues, festivals or other organisations. Sometimes we fund festivals because they commit to creating and presenting new or re-imagined work that has a legacy beyond the festival. We are committed to supporting a diverse range of work under the four headings of dance, music, opera and theatre, as well as supporting other art forms not covered by these headings that are able to create intellectual and emotional connections with individuals and wider society and reflect the human condition. Ultimately, our priority is to support the creation of high quality and engaging work.

Finally, we are not focussed on supporting work under our arts category solely for its educational value or social benefit – although we recognise that these are both positive additional benefits. We expect applicants to demonstrate how their work is of high quality by providing us with evidence of positive audience feedback and engagement, awards and accolades and professional reviews.

When will you fund research?

We recognise that rigorous research and policy analysis can provide the evidence and arguments to advocate for important changes in practice. We prefer to fund this sort of work if it is grounded in real life experience, includes the voices of those affected, and is likely to make a practical difference. When considering such proposals, your track record, expertise, knowledge of the context and understanding of how to effect such change will be important considerations.

Do you fund universities?

Not usually, and not for their core work. Exceptionally, we may consider an application from a specialist unit if you are a centre of excellence and a leader in your field. Your work should:

- be distinctive and likely to make a practical difference
- involve partnerships with charities or NGOs
- have a budget that includes no contribution to central overheads
- strongly match our funding interests.

How long will you make a grant for?

Most of our grants are for two or three years, but as a responsive and flexible funder we are willing to consider different timeframes. The Grants Team is on hand to answer any questions you may have in this regard. As mentioned above, to get an idea of the kind of grants we have awarded in the past, take a look at the grants list on our website or on 360Giving.

When is the best time for me to apply? Do you have any deadlines?

For the majority of applications there are no deadlines and you can apply at any time. We make decisions regularly throughout the year. A summary of how our applications are processed, and how long that takes is available [here](#) on our website.

Some work strands, such as the Museums and Galleries Fund have an annual application deadline. Please check the website for more information on these.

How quickly will I know your decision?

We will acknowledge your application within one week.

We have a two-stage application process. We aim to deal with all first-stage applications within one to two months. On the rare occasion an application takes longer, we will be in touch.

Second-stage applicants are asked to submit their second-stage form within a month of being invited to do so. You should receive a decision within a maximum of three months.

When can I reapply if I have been turned down?

One year from the date of submitting your application.

When can I reapply if I have a grant? Do you provide continuation funding?

In the past we asked grantees to wait for one year after their grant had ended before coming back with a new funding request. However, our experience of providing funding during the Covid-19 pandemic means that we have removed the need for organisations we fund to take a break before re-applying to us. We ask that you make your new application to us once you have submitted your Final Report and your current grant comes to a close. However, if you need to begin your new application sooner than this, then you need to contact the member of the team managing your grant to talk through the best approach for your organisation to take.

Can I discuss my application with you before I apply?

We are always happy to discuss potential applications. Before you get in touch, please read our guidance.

Do I have to be a registered charity to apply?

We will only make grants to registered, excepted or exempt charities. However, we will sometimes make an exception if the organisation presents a clear case for why they cannot deliver their charitable purpose via the charity format. In practice this applies primarily to policy, advocacy and campaigning activities under the Social Action and Environment categories. We would still need to see evidence of charitable objects, an asset lock, and robust governance.

Do our accounts need to be audited by an independent auditor?

Your accounts must adhere to Charity Commission guidance, and so if you are able to submit accounts that have been reviewed by an independent examiner then we will accept these too. If you are not a registered charity, then your accounts must be reviewed as per the processes in place for your organisation type.

What does it mean when the Foundation says they are a Living Wage funder?

We are a Living Wage Friendly Funder, which means we are committed to tackling low pay by encouraging the organisations we support to pay the real Living Wage. You can find out more about the Living Wage [here](#). The Real Living Wage is updated annually in November, and as of October 2022 the current rates are £10.90 across the UK and £11.95 in London.

We want to support our grantees to pay their employees the Living Wage as outlined above. Please do consider this when applying for funding to cover salaries within your proposals. The Grants Team may suggest changes to budgets where we think that the Living Wage is not being offered.

What can I do if I am unhappy about any stage of the application process?

We want organisations and the individuals submitting applications to contact us if they have feedback on our application process that could lead to improvements. We also have a Complaints Policy that you can use if you would like to make a complaint, which is available [on our website](#). Complaints are managed by our Senior Grants Manager. Furthermore, every two to three years, we run an independently commissioned audit of our application process that is sent to all applicants and grant-holders – this offers a review of our application process too.

How long will we have to wait before receiving funds after having a proposal approved?

We aim to distribute the first payment of a grant as soon as possible after receiving and approving the required bank details as set out in the offer letter. The only time this is delayed is if there are conditions on the grant, for example: grant is payable upon recruitment to a role.

Who makes the decisions at the different stages of the application process?

The Grants Team perform simple eligibility checks when an application is submitted and may reject proposals at this point if they do not pass these tests. Trustees are responsible for all decisions at the first and second stages and are assisted by the Grants Team in making these decisions.

What information do I need to make an application?

You can view all the information that we require for our first and second stage applications in this [guidance document](#).

Can I include hyperlinks and/or images in my application?

You can include some hyperlinks to supplementary information that support what you have referred to in your application. We encourage you to offer some context for the hyperlinks, as we may not be able to read the information contained within the hyperlinked information in full. Images can also be used, but please note that these images will need to be included as part of the two-page limit we set for first stage application.

Do you ask applicants for information on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?

Yes. We have adopted the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Standard, which means we ask applicants to provide information about DEI as part of their first stage application. The DEI Data Standard has been produced by a group of charitable funders, including us, and you can find out more about this work [here](#).

We are asking these questions to gain a better understanding about the kinds of organisations that are applying to us and that we go on to fund. Please note that the information provided **will not** be used as part of our decision making. There is no judgment or preference for particular responses. Applicants also have the option of selecting 'prefer not to say' for this section of the application.

6. How to apply

How much can I apply for?

On our main grants programme, we generally make grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 per year, for up to three years. Last year our grants ranged from £7,500 to £150,000 and the average grant size was around £97,000. To get an idea of the size of grant we make, take a look at the [grants list](#) on our website or on [360Giving](#).

Before you apply

Before you apply, please make sure that you have read our funding guidelines carefully to ensure that your organisation is eligible and that your work meets our funding priorities.

We receive many more applications than we can fund. Unfortunately, this means that even if your work matches our areas of interest, we may not be able to make a grant. If you are unsuccessful, we will ask you to wait for one year from the date you submitted your previous application before you reapply.

The application process consists of two stages:

Stage 1

1. Please complete a two A4 page proposal using a minimum font size of 10/11 with the following headings:
 - A brief summary of your organisation's aims and activities
 - How your proposal meets our requirement that the work is of a national significance
 - What you would like us to fund and why you are well placed to do this work
 - How your proposal fits the criteria for the relevant category you are applying under
2. Ensure you have a copy of your most recent annual accounts to hand.
 - You will need to upload a copy of your most recent audited accounts.
 - If the year-end date of your accounts is more than 10 months ago, we will also ask you to upload your latest management accounts.
 - If your accounts show a significant surplus or deficit, high or low reserves, we will ask you to provide a brief explanation.
3. Our online portal is available through our website, and you can create an online account ([here](#)). Through your online account you can then upload your first stage proposal and financial information.

We make funding decisions throughout the year so you can apply at any time. However, if you are applying to the Museums and Galleries Fund there is an annual deadline and separate application process, so please check our website for details.

Once you have created your online account and uploaded your first stage application you will receive an instant confirmation. We will usually contact you within a month to let you know whether your proposal is eligible.

Stage 2

If your application proceeds to second stage, we will ask for a more detailed proposal and additional information. Then we will arrange to meet you to find out more about your work.

At this second stage, we aim to make a decision within three months. If your application takes longer, we will be in touch.

Further advice

If you are unsure about whether to apply or need further information about the application process, please call us on 020 7930 8566 or email Stephanie@ellerman.org.uk. We are happy to offer advice on applications via phone, video call, or email.

You can find full details of both stages of our application process [here](#).